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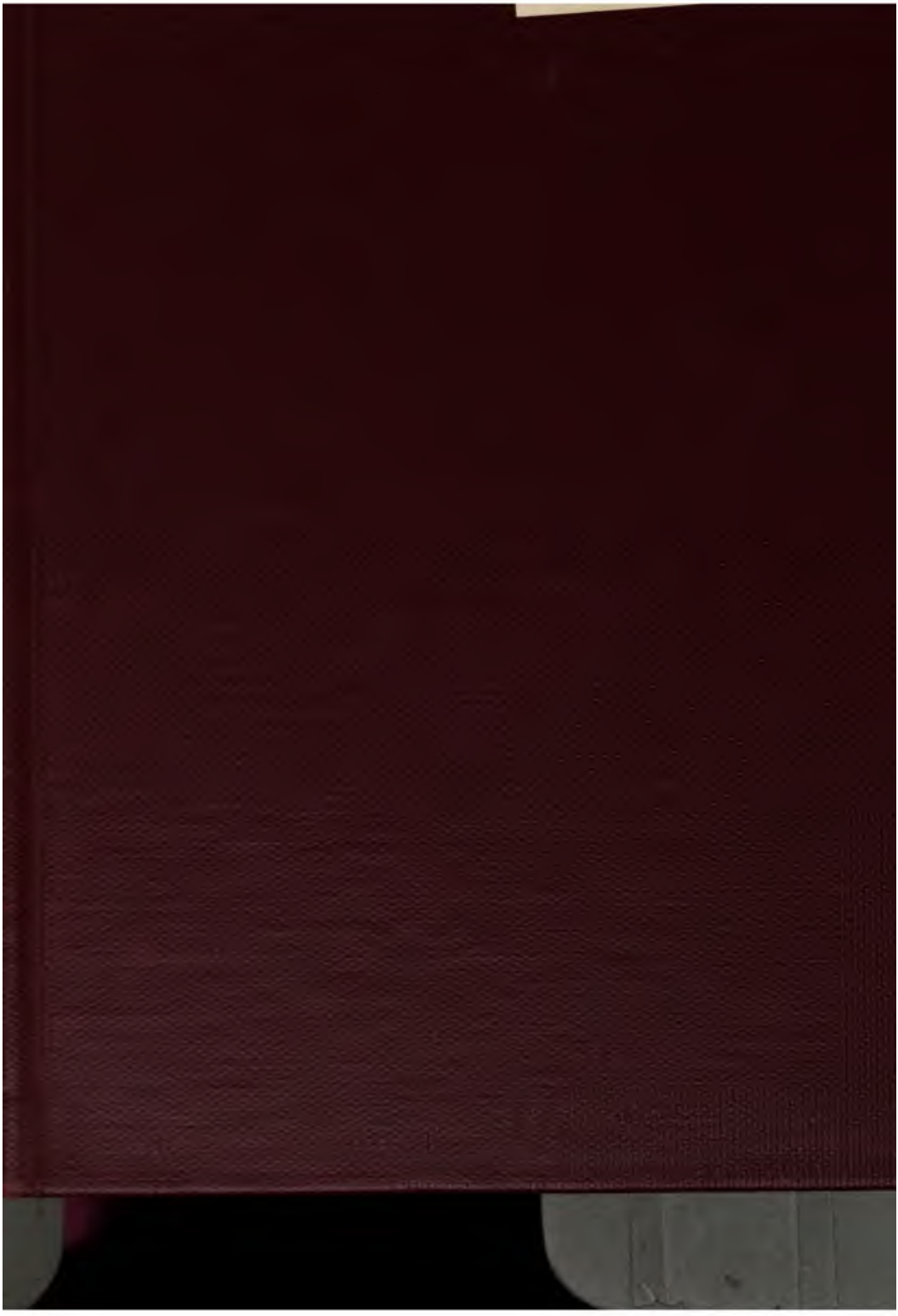

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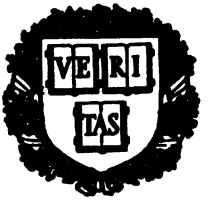

FROM THE BEQUEST OF
JAMES WALKER
(Class of 1814)
President of Harvard College

"Preference being given to works in the Intellectual and Moral Sciences"

GENIUS AND DEGENERATION

A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

BY

DR. WILLIAM HIRSCH

TRANSLATED FROM THE SECOND EDITION OF
THE GERMAN WORK

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1896

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Dedicated,

WITH THE AUTHOR'S AFFECTIONATE ESTEEM, TO

DR. E. MENDEL,

PROFESSOR OF NERVOUS AND MENTAL DISEASES AT

THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN.

PREFACE.

IT is a special trait of recent times that science, particularly the natural sciences, have assumed an international character. All civilized nations are equally interested in the great problems of the day, and they all contribute in greater or less degree to the mighty structure of modern science. Nevertheless, the mutual exchange of ideas is sometimes impeded by differences of language, and this difficulty is increased when not only the external form but also the presentation of the subject bears the stamp of a peculiarly national characteristic. I felt myself confronted by such a difficulty when I concluded to place the present work before an English-speaking public. The anthropological questions treated here have made it necessary to undertake a psychological analysis of certain individuals, and to attempt to penetrate as far as possible to the depths of their mental processes. It was natural that in the original production of this work the intellectual heroes of the German people should have been selected, and it is evident that the appreciation of their traits and work is more perfect among their own people than among foreign nations. Nevertheless, I am sure that the characters selected for analysis, from whose life and works I have attempted to arrive at a correct conception of both genius and degeneration, are sufficiently well known to the English reader.

The purpose of this publication was to aid in the elucidation of certain anthropological moot-questions and to clear up certain notions that were apt to create confusion not only in medical circles but also in the wider field of the cultured laity. It can hardly be necessary to disclaim any personal motives in my criticisms of the views of other writers on this subject. Nor was it my object to enter into a critique of the artistic value of the productions of those whose works I have examined, and I trust the reader will bear these facts in mind while perusing the polemical portions of the book. If I have contributed in some measure to a clearer view of the truth of the questions discussed, the purpose of this work will be fulfilled. W. H.

NEW YORK, *August, 1896.*

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lar organ, biologically indistinguishable from a somatic disorder, was, in former times, not understood. The notion of madness was mixed up with religious faiths and metaphysical theories. Thousands were burned at the stake simply because men were not so far enlightened as to recognise that their victims were mentally sick, instead of being, as they imagined, bewitched or possessed by devils. Think, too, of the multitudes of entirely sane and innocent persons who were sent to the rack and the stake upon the accusations of madmen—mere crazy delusions! Along with such dreadful results of ignorance, and contributing to them, we find, in ages widely separated, men's general conceptions of the course of nature influenced by superstitions and religious enthusiasms fostered by the behaviour of the insane, and accepted largely in deference to teachings of bewildered minds.

About the end of the eighteenth century the sad veil of superstition began to be lifted. Yet the pathway of knowledge was still a thorny and difficult one. Many an obstacle remained to be removed. Many a hot fight had to be fought out. Often and often, even in this nineteenth century, theologians set their traps to render the scientific pathway personally perilous. Even as elevated a mind as Heinroth declared that the cause of insanity was sin.

Alienists to-day no longer regard mental and bodily maladies as distinct. In the majority of bodily diseases some affection of the mental powers is observable; so that no scientific physician will overlook the importance of psychical influences. On the other hand, bodily symptoms occur in by far the greater proportion of cases of insanity. We can sometimes predict a severe and almost fatal derangement of the mind, at a time when hardly any aberration has yet appeared, on the strength of somatic symptoms that no ordinary person would remark. Thus, mental and bodily disease are quite inseparable; and a rational treatment of psy-

choses must be based upon a solid foundation of general medical skill.

In spite of all these facts, attempts are still made to withdraw the care of the insane from the hands of physicians and to intrust it to the clergy. At a meeting of the German Union of Evangelical Curates of the Insane, the Rev. von Bodelschwingh, while admitting that "modern medico-scientific psychiatry had done good service in the recognition, treatment, and cure of the insane," yet censured it as "at bottom materialistic and temporal." "It leaves," he said, "sin and grace, conscience and guilt, quite out of sight, and does not recognise that forgiveness of sins brings life and spiritual health." He continued as follows: "Speaking broadly, the less the bodily physician uses his *materia medica* in mental maladies, the better. Such things, for the most part, only damage body and soul. The bodily physician may be helpful in the care of the insane, but the prime thing is the treatment of the sick soul; and this should not be intrusted to the physician in the main." *

Such utterances are, of course, merely the efforts of the clergy to extend their power. But inasmuch as they tend to injure patients, not to say society itself, the interests of civilization call upon men of science to combat them.

Nor is it by the clergy alone that attacks upon psychiatry are made. Various causes have conspired to create of late years some distrust of this branch of medicine. The general public is naturally liable to misinterpret cases of insanity in which the symptoms are not so obvious that no onlooker can mistake them, and where the practised eye of the specialist is required to detect their real nature. Then, too, the not infrequent differences of opinion among experts in insanity, leading, as they often do, to contrary

* Compare the report of the yearly meeting of the Association of German Alienists, at Frankfurt a. M., 1893. Report upon Psychiatry and the Care of Souls, by Siemens.

judgments about the nature of individual cases, are cited as so many proofs that psychiatry is an illusory science, and that its practitioners are not to be trusted to decide upon the fate of a man.

But this is altogether fallacious. Similar objections would lie against any other practical science. Name, if you can, the branch of clinical medicine in which doubtful cases do not occur, or where divergences of opinion are less frequent than in psychiatry itself. No science whatsoever is perfect or infallible. In every field our knowledge and skill have their limits, and there are disputed marches between the completed conquests of science and the regions her armies have not yet invaded. Cases in law, as everybody knows, are continually arising concerning which the greatest jurists pronounce diametrically contrary opinions. Yet the ideas and terms with which the lawyer has to deal are, from the nature of things, susceptible of more rigidly exact definition than those which form the stock of the alienist.

In point of accuracy, psychical pathology simply stands upon the general level of other branches of clinical medicine. There are cases upon the border line between insanity and mental sanity, and concerning them differences of opinion are unavoidable. But how can that be considered to detract from the value of the general science? Mistakes occur wherever human judgment has to be exercised. Indeed, every remarkable advance of human knowledge is secured at the cost of temporary errors.

No doubt many tendencies in modern psychiatry spring from erroneous conceptions. The very purpose of this book is to contribute something toward the clearing up of certain psychological and psychiatrical notions which have already occasioned not a few disputes and misunderstandings.

The wisdom of early ages burned the insane as witches

and sorcerers, or, at best, incarcerated them in dismal dungeons and loaded them with chains. Down to the very beginning of this century insanity was hardly recognised as a branch of medical science. But now the pendulum has swung the other way, and there are efforts in many quarters to narrow more and more the boundaries of mental sanity, until every mind, decidedly unlike those we daily come in touch with, or manifesting any extraordinary characteristics is labelled as diseased. Not only are the less gifted—particularly criminals—frequently considered as insane, but eminent writers go so far as to pronounce every mind whose capacity greatly surpasses the average to be a pathological subject.

Such doctrines are examples of a class of errors which frequently arise from the gradual modification of the meanings of scientific terms that had never been distinctly apprehended. Among such terms are those of Genius and Degeneration; and to analyze these conceptions is the purpose of this work. Their psychological and psychiatric significations have, as we shall find, been most diversely conceived, and this has led to many misunderstandings.

Before we enunciate our proper theses it will be convenient briefly to consider the main symptoms of insanity, so that we may be able to estimate how far we are in a condition to draw any sharp line of demarcation between mental sanity and mental disease.

THE LIMITS OF INSANITY.

THE symptoms of psychical disorders resemble those of the body in this: that they are not phenomena absolutely unlike those of the normal state, but are mere modifications of the latter. In the vast majority of instances they consist in a relative augmentation or diminution of healthy conditions, so that for every symptom of insanity we are able to point out an analogous normal process of the mind.

Considering that even in somatic medicine, with the aid of all the appliances there at our command, we can not always draw the line between health and disease, we certainly ought not to expect to do so in every case presented to psychiatry, concerned as this branch is with a far more complicated organism than any other department of medicine. Nor should we draw the limits of health too narrowly; we have to allow sufficient room for all varieties of minds.

Let a sane man undergo a mental shock, say the death of a near relative. He will experience an intense depression of feeling, and will very likely be overwhelmed with grief. The events of the world around him will pass unnoticed, and things that had excited his interest in the highest degree will fail to make upon him the slightest impression. The intensity of this condition will vary with different men. One will be more susceptible to psychical pains than another. One will be able to fight down his feelings with his reason, while another will give himself over to unbridled grief. But whether in greater degree or less, in some meas-

ure, in the circumstances supposed, the sane man will always experience such grief. Complete psychical anæsthesia, or insensibility, is a symptom of psychical disease. We observe it in the most diverse forms of insanity.

On the other hand, it is not unusual to find persons in whom such a depression of spirits as we have described is brought on by quite trifling causes. The refusal of a new dress or seal-skin sack, rainy weather which interferes with a projected picnic, and things of that description, may suffice to bring on a shower of tears and to conjure up a state of despair, or at least of deep mental perturbation. In fact, this is the regular result with children. But in adults we call it excessive sensitiveness, or psychical hyperæsthesia. It is especially met with in hysterical and degenerate individuals.

Finally, the same state of deep depression and complete apathy is also found without the slightest outward reason, being brought on by inward conditions. In that case we diagnose a grave psychical malady—to wit, melancholia.

It is ~~the same with the cheerful~~ emotions. Any sound man may, upon a particularly joyful occasion, as upon the successful passage of an examination, or the winning of a lottery prize, give way to an exuberance of behaviour which a hysterical or degenerate subject will exhibit upon the most trifling occasion. But if such a state is brought on without any external reason whatever, it betokens a form of disease which may pass into foaming rage; and this we term mania.

It is just the same with anger, vexation, fear, anxiety, and other emotions. From the normal psychical action we pass through successive exaggerations of emotion to a rage quite without reason but determined by inward conditions.

Even irrational emotion is not without its analogue within the latitude of the normal state of our spirits. Almost every man has his ups and downs of spirits, his greater or less mental tone. One day, he knows not why, he is in good con-

dition for work; another day he has to force himself to his duty. An artist says, "It is of no use; I am in no trim for work to-day; I am not in the mood for it." If we imagined curves to be drawn of these moods in different men, we should find waves of small amplitude even in the most solid and stolid men of business; while passing to the artists, and from them to the Skimpoles, and from them, again, to persons usually called hysterical, the oscillations would be greater and greater. The slight spontaneous irregularities of temper of the perfectly sane man will be manifest only to his most intimate companions; for he will contrive to give his moods a factitious backing of reason, though this may perhaps deceive no close observer. But the hysterical, and those who abandon self-government, will in the wildest fashion give rein to every freak, quite forgetful of the company in which they may be. We can, however, assign no accurate limits to healthy variations. We can not say, At this point precisely sanity ends and madness begins. There is no such boundary in Nature. The difference between a particular disposition and insanity is but a question of more or less.

All our impressions, whether of the external world or of ourselves, are conveyed to us by the sensory-nerves. The excitation of a sensory-nerve terminal results in a sensation at the central end of the peripheral nerve, in the brain. Hence the excitation is propagated to the cortex, or outer part of the brain, where is the terminus of the sensory tract; and here the sensation, brayed, as it were, with the residua of former impressions, is converted into a perception. Every sensation that has once been worked up into a perception is capable of being spontaneously or voluntarily excited anew. The re-excitation or reminiscence of an image which has so arisen, whether by a peripheral excitation, or spontaneously, or voluntarily, brings along with it the recollection of other images. Those connecting nerve

fibres, by means of which associated sensations are produced, are termed associational tracts. The aggregate of a great multitude of reminiscential images belonging to different organs of sense makes what we call a perceptual idea, or percept (*Vorstellung*). For example, let the word *bell* be mentioned. What does it mean? It brings up the optical image of a certain cubic curve, the form of the outline of the bell; it brings up the four letters b e l l; it brings up the sound the instrument produces; and, finally, it brings up the sonorous syllable which we are accustomed to fancy resembles that sound. All these images (and mind, that in psychology we speak of auditory, olfactory, and other reminiscences as *images*) are recalled, and with them traces of other things associated with bells—some merry sleighing-party of the hearer's youth; his wedding-day, perhaps; the dreadful summons of the people on some occasion of a fire or of anticipated invasion; and, possibly, some well-remembered funeral. All these things come welling up to us, like the swelling of the sound produced by interferences. Language has no word more vividly significant than *bell*, because the more memorial images cluster about an idea, the clearer will it be, and the easier reproduced, or, in other words, the more it clings to the memory. If you have to remember a name you ask to have it written down, because the auditory image will be more readily reproduced if once associated with the visual image.

The more intense and extraordinary an original impression of sense, the more distinctly will it be reproduced. But after a while the reproduced image loses its distinctive characters. It becomes vague, and in that sense weaker. The remembered sound of the cannon of a distant battle-field, though not perhaps less loud, is less distinguished from other remembered sounds, unless, indeed, more recent experiences refresh our memory.

The period of time within which a memorial stimulus of

given power can excite a recollection of given definiteness varies through a wide range with different individuals. Within the latitude of health there are good and bad memories, and memories of different kinds. In pathological cases, this action of the cortex may sink almost or quite to zero, or be exaggerated surprisingly.

As a multitude of impressions are worked together into an image, and a multitude of images into a perceptual idea, so a complexus of perceptual ideas has for its resultant a *thought*, wherein there is a representation of the way events happen, in general, and of the relation of our ego to the macrocosm. Such general conception of the relation between the inner and outer world makes what the psychologist means by self-consciousness—or, as it has been called, the consciousness of conseiousness, or superintending-consciousness (*Oberbewusstsein*).

The procedure of thought is perfected in an arrangement of ideas in sequence. In the waking state there is a ceaseless flow of percepts—that is, a continual thinking-process takes place in the brain. Those percepts are occasionally excited by the peripheral organs, or they are supplied by inward excitations following the tracts of association.

The sequence of percepts may be determined either involuntarily by spontaneous associations and outward impressions, or by the active exercise of attention.

Stimuli from the peripheral organs of sense may be called *centripetal* actions, the operations of association *intra-central*, and the idea due to the will *centrifugal*. The function of this centrifugal action is to bring the ideas into a regular sequence by excluding unsuitable centripetal percepts, and by strengthening some associations and weakening others. In common speech we call this centrifugal action *attention*. It fulfils one of the most important offices of the mind, since without it thought could not be made purposive.

The power of attention of a sane man has to be considerable, so that he may hold his ideas in the right order for a long time without fatigue. In idiots, on the other hand, it is occasionally so completely wanting that they can not swerve the slow current of their ideas. Between these two extremes every possible grade of this power is met with. Every teacher of children knows that some of them concentrate their thoughts with comparatively little difficulty, while others are at the mercy of every little presentation in the room or out at the window, as well as of their own recollections.

The process of association may follow different principles. An idea may melt into another inwardly allied to it. I hear a musical air, for example. This sets all sorts of subconscious ideas relating to music into motion toward the surface of consciousness. Some circumstance or other, perhaps its recent prominence, gives a clear outline, let us suppose, to the idea of the Magic Flute before the others. Now, it is particularly ideas of operatic music whose gradual movement toward emergence is accelerated. I find myself reviewing several operas; or, if a number of such ideas emerge at once, a general conception of operatic music is formed in my mind. Among these pictures, perhaps one of a grand performance at La Scala may, by its splendour, obliterate others. By this time my reminiscences of oratorios, symphonies, chamber music, etc., are sinking back into slumber, while pictures of various opera houses are crowding up to the surface. Their multitude prevents my distinctly dwelling upon any one. The resultant is a general idea of theatrical architecture. Now memories of other magnificent pieces of architecture begin to take places in the composite photograph of my imagination, and as, by the operation of fatigue, the intense assertiveness of the ideas which have been longer before my mind wanes, perhaps the resultant of those that remain leaves me thinking of tri-

umphal arches. This is an imaginary example of a train of association governed chiefly by the principle called *resemblance*—that is, by the intrinsic affinities of ideas. Another principle is that called *contiguity*, where an idea, A, calls up another, B, having no inward affinity for it, because the sequence of B upon A has an analogy, or inward affinity, with the sequence of *b* upon *a*, where *b* and *a* are ideas which occurred at some previous time, *b* following after *a*. For example, I see a porringer, let us say, which I remember to have used in my childhood. The whole scene straightway completes itself in my imagination—the chamber, the furniture, the nurse, appear before me. Thence my fancy is carried forward to the day when that nurse was married from the house, and the image of the man she married is called up. Then follows the picture of a visit I subsequently made to see how the couple were prospering, etc. These ideas follow one another because similar ideas did follow one another upon a former presentation of them. The principles of resemblance and contiguity may act in conjunction, as they do in the minds of those who are continually chasing puns and rhymes. Here ideas the most incongruous may be associated, because the former recalls by contiguity a word or phrase which by resemblance calls forth another word, which in its turn reproduces by contiguity the second idea. We make use of this sort of association in mnemonic verses, such as "Thirty days hath September," etc. Countless systems of artificial memory repose on the same principle; and so does the very natural method of attending to a general rule observable among certain objects for the sake of remembering the objects themselves.

The rapidity with which the process of associative reproduction takes place can be little varied by any effort of the will. It depends upon the freshness or fatigue of the nervous system at the time. It differs, too, with different individuals. Under pathological conditions it may either sink

to such a minimum that patients will themselves complain of their vacuity of mind and mental retardation, or it may become an abnormal rush of ideas. When the rapidity of the associative process is slightly increased, the patient feels extremely well. He is in the mood for brilliant performances, thoughts fly to him, his conversation sparkles, he improvises, he impresses those about him as being a witty and clever man. With a still greater rapidity of associative action there is such a rush of ideas that they tumble over one another, lose their logical relations, and end in a delirious whirl.

We have thus far considered only cases in which every idea is excited by a stimulus external or associational. We now come to a different phenomenon. Almost every man knows what it is, while endeavouring to think consecutively, suddenly to have an unwelcome image obtrude itself; perhaps a musical air which he has of late heard too often repeats itself in his brain without being led up to at all. We often hear it said, "I can not get that accursed tune out of my head." Phenomena of this kind are to be explained by the tendency of some part of the cortex which has been excessively excited to pass into the active condition spontaneously. In quite an analogous way the most complicated percepts may spring up spontaneously, breaking into the normal current of thought. When an idea thus becomes a continual hindrance to rational thought, we call it an imperative idea. It forms a disease inflicting, as a rule, great torment and anguish upon the patient, and leads to further complications.

We have said that every sense-perception once experienced may be reproduced without any new stimulus. Now, if, independently of any associational process, a reminiscential image is excited spontaneously with extraordinary strength, the vividness, or subjective intensity of the idea, may be so heightened as to take on every characteristic of

actual perception. Let an excitation run over the path which leads from the subcortical centre which is the seat of the primary sensation to the cortical centre of perception, and whether it have a centrifugal origin, or whether it be centripetally propagated, the result will ordinarily be the same—namely, that we shall project the percept into our idea of the outward world. We shall unhesitatingly accept the thing we see or the language we hear as real external experiences, although the whole may be nothing but hallucination.

The relative intensity with which a given perception can be reproduced by a given person depends on the intensity of the original excitation and the degree of attention that had been originally bestowed upon it. In different persons the intensity of reproductive power varies exceedingly. It is low in some minds; while others, especially artists, possess a very high degree of imagination. Some painters can at will call up visual images which they proceed to copy upon their canvas just as if they were painting from Nature; and a successful writer for the orchestra will seem to hear the effect of a given combination of instruments, so as to achieve with unerring certainty results that the greatest theoretician could not rival.

Muscular motions are of three kinds—the automatic, the reflex, and the voluntary. Automatic motions, such as the beating of the heart and ordinary respiration, are caused by the action of special centres; and though they may be influenced by reflex, or even in some measure by voluntary action, they act, nevertheless, independently. Reflex motions originate in centres which do not, like the automatic centres, produce any excitations, but only receive them from sensory nerves. Examples are the contraction of the pupil of the eye under increased illumination, and winking upon any touch of the eyelid.

To bring about a voluntary motion, a centripetal impulse

is ordinarily requisite, to stimulate the psychomotor centre. Yet it is possible for the excitation to arise within that centre. Every man has his peculiar tricks, unless he has taken pains to conquer them. He pulls his beard, or sniffs, or bites his mustache, or rubs his hands, or gives some peculiar twitch, more or less annoying to his neighbours, unconsciously to himself and without any outward stimulus, simply in consequence of a chronically excited state of some centre. These excitations are sometimes sufficient to produce large and co-ordinated motions for which, in ordinary circumstances, the co-operation of the will would be requisite. Many people can not sit long still without an uncontrollable impulse to move about. They jump up from their work, take a turn or two up and down the room, and then sit down to their work again.

Such excitations as these may likewise be exaggerated to the point of disease. In mania they are seen in their most extreme form. Patients yell, rage, strike, and smash, without knowing what they are about.

Among the most important symptoms of psychical maladies, often most difficult to recognize, are delusions. The general public imagines that delusions consist essentially in believing something that is utterly absurd. Nothing could be more erroneous. A delusion may be in substance quite true, while the sheerest nonsense may be produced in the mind without any delusion. A person may fancy he has a living creature in his body, and, though it may in fact be true that he has a tapeworm, yet, if the opinion is not founded on any sound process of thought, it certainly is none the less to be classed along with genuine delusions because it accidentally happens to come true.

Of three so-called "spiritualists," let one be a simpleton who, without any logical conviction, has been led—by sheer credulity, or weak assent to energetic assertion—to admit the phenomena of mediumship. Let the second be a learned

man who has been imposed upon by legerdemain, and who endeavours to explain what he thinks he has seen in a scientific way; and let the third be one with whom the belief is of the nature of an insane delusion. They all believe the same thing; so that it can not be said that it is the nature of what is believed that constitutes the insanity. It is rather the mode in which the belief has come about, its relation to the other operations of the mind, its mode of expression, its relation to the interests of the believer, that must be relied upon to determine the alienist to diagnose a true delusion.

Anomalies of the propensities play a great part in the pathology of the mind. Like the other symptoms of insanity, abnormal impulses are but quantitative or qualitative modifications of healthy conditions. Psychiatry has never discovered any new passion. The appetites vary greatly in different individuals; and here again we must take care to allow sufficient latitude to healthy variations. The feeling of hunger, or the propensity to eat, may in the most diverse psychical disorders be enormously exalted. This is called hyperorexia. It sometimes goes so far that the patient tries to devour whatever he can lay hands on. This is called sitomania. On the other hand, the propensity may be distinctly lowered in intensity or even lost. This is called anorexia. Of course, none of these states includes cases in which the modification of the appetite is caused by derangements of the organs of digestion. Finally, the desire for food may be directed to strange substances, as often happens to pregnant women. In the insane this perversion of appetite will sometimes be so great as to induce them to eat straw, earth, worms, and even their own filth.

We sometimes find the other propensities equally deranged. The sexual impulse may be exalted to the highest degree—a state called satyriasis in men, nymphomania in women. The sexual appetite may be depressed or lost in

total impotence. It may be perverted to one's own sex or to other things.

I must apologize for this general description of the symptoms of insanity, which does not directly concern the subject of this book. I have entered upon it for the purpose of showing that, in order to determine the state of mental sanity or insanity, it does not suffice to produce certain extraordinary or absurd modes of behaviour or temper; that we can hardly pronounce a man to be insane from any conduct until we know what his motives are; and, finally, that we are not to judge from a part of his mental actions, but must get a clear notion of his whole mental condition. I have further endeavoured to show that, as far as single symptoms go, no sharp line of demarcation can be drawn between mental sanity and insanity. Just as there are physically strong men and physically weak men, men of large bodies and men of puny bodies, so within the limits of health there are mental athletes and mental weaklings. Moreover, just as no two men are in person counterparts the one of the other, so there are no two whose characters are precisely alike. There are perfectly healthy men with extraordinary physiognomies or peculiarities of bodily structure; and in like manner unusual traits of character are to be met with. The study of such men may be interesting to the psychologist, but it does not directly concern the pathology of the mind.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GENIUS.

IT is plain from the nature of psychology, as well as from its history, that it has to contend with difficulties and perplexities of a magnitude and character with which no other observational science is perplexed. An immediate acquaintance with psychical conditions can only be obtained by self-observation; so that this has always formed the foundation of the scientific edifice. Nor can any generalization of observation possibly be attained except by means of the concepts derived from self-observation. This entails the great disadvantage that there is wanting to psychology the objectivity of the observation, in that the subject and object thereof are one person. This is yet further increased by the impossibility of repeating any observation, so that in psychology we lack almost entirely one of the most important aids of natural sciences—namely, experiment.

Our knowledge of the physiology of the human body has been so much enriched by pathological facts that we may truly say that some branches of it would, as far as we can see, have remained forever closed books if the effects of disease had not been observed. So it is with psychology, in its turn. Since mental disease has been systematically studied the science of the mind has undergone a veritable revolution. Psychology and psychiatry are to-day inseparably connected. Neither could survive, were the bond between them severed.

Psychology began by being largely speculative. It preserved this character for quite a lengthy period. It has, in

more modern times, passed into paths essentially different, and stands to-day, side by side with the other positive sciences, upon the solid ground of critical observation. Partly, though only to a moderate extent, it has entered upon experimental investigations.

Every observational science, after having effected a preliminary rough analysis of the ordinary facts, has fastened its scrutiny upon extreme cases and apparent departures from the uniformities of the matter in hand. From a study of these varieties and from a comparison of them with ordinary cases, it brings forth fresh knowledge. Psychologists are beginning to do this; and especially of late years much attention has been bestowed upon those extraordinary powers which we ordinarily indicate by the word genius.

The results of these inquiries are thus far as diverse as possible, and, just as in former scientific controversies, leading men assume attitudes of almost flat contradiction. Let us see whether we can not, with the investigations already at our command, attain a clearer conception of the concept of genius.

As the etymology of the word, which is derived from *genius* or *ingenium*, directly indicates, the ancients believed, according to their view of the world, that within persons of eminence—those men who guided the destinies of nations or were able to accomplish phenomenal deeds in the domains of art or science—a divine spirit dwelt. A *genius*, for example, spoke to the people through the mediumship of the Pythian priestess; a divine spirit opened to Socrates the fountains of knowledge and science, and inspired Homer with divine song, enabling him to perceive the world as a magnificent fulness of ideals and beauties. It conducted Miltiades through the tumult of battle to glorious victory and smoothed for Plato the path to eternal wisdom.

This idealistic method of viewing things has been transmitted from century to century down to our own time. In the saints of the Middle Ages we see the idea of the Holy Ghost corporealized. By the mouths of priests and prophets "God" speaks to the people. Rulers are invested with "divine right." They rule by the "divine will." The powerful thinkers who guide the world by great discoveries are filled with "divine grace." In those who by their art embellish the world there shone a "divine spark," a fragment of the Holy Ghost. By their mouths God spoke to men. Genius was eternal and incomprehensible. Its knowledge and power were infinite.

Modern science has applied the dissecting knife to this fantastic web of speculative philosophy, has analyzed the whole matter into its elementary constituents, stripped the natural phenomena of their habiliments of superstition and mysticism, and, while thus destroying many a beloved ideal, acts in the consciousness that it is struggling after real knowledge and truth.

Psychology, having by self-observation laid down a series of conceptions, and having attained the knowledge that psychical processes, like all other phenomena of Nature, are subject to definite law, made an effort to determine the laws of the mental processes of genius, and to frame a definition of genius, which should take into account facts which are now scientifically established.

But these efforts are characterized by the same mighty error and the same important defect that has ere this provoked many a battle between scientific men. In vain had philosophers for several ages endeavoured to say in what genius consisted, until in these latter times some authors believe they have discovered the philosopher's stone and have pronounced genius to be a variety of insanity. Unfortunately, they were not themselves clear about the definition of genius nor, perhaps, about that of insanity.

An accurate science ought to provide names only for known phenomena. It might view a complex of phenomena as one object, and apply to it a collective name. Having done so, it can again perform specification within the limits of the *genus*. But science shall always go wrong and shall exercise itself about phantoms, if it accepts *a priori* some word or other as something laid down, so to speak, independently, and then tries to call forth from the phenomena sufficient material whereby to explain a notion somehow made inherent in this word.

To so plain a truth one might hesitate to refer. And yet how often has science sinned against it! Innumerable tomes, for example, have been written on the inquiry of whether the human will is *free* or determined. Quarrels, bitter to the point of persecution, have been indulged in by high authorities upon this question. Finally, it has been proved to be merely a contest about "words," for each individual combined with the word "will" some different notion regarding which he himself never for an instant was clear. Nowhere is this error of science better expressed than in the words of Goethe:

> *Student.* But every word must have some sense exact.
> *Mephistopheles.* Of course; but let not that your mind distract;
> For oft to fill the meaning's awkward blank,
> A serviceable word we have to thank.
> With words we gloriously may dispute,
> With words a system constitute;
> Words will suffice for faith unshaken,
> For from the Word shall jot nor tittle e'er be taken.

Many authors make any person endowed with specially excellent mental powers a genius. Thus Sulzer, in his dictionary,* says: "Genius seems to be ascribed to any man who, in departments for which he shows a natural turn, dis-

* Theorie der schönen Künste, 3d ed., 1798. Article, Genie.

plays remarkable skill and a more copious fertility of mind than other men. . . . Genius seems at bottom to be nothing but great general power of mind; so that 'a great mind' and 'a man of genius' are synonymous terms." Du Bos* defines genius as "the natural skill by which a man is enabled to perform certain things well and easily that other men, whatever pains they may take, can only do ill." Riedel,† Feder,‡ Baumgarten,* and others express themselves to the same effect. Herder‖ says: "Everybody knows that genius is nothing but the intensive or extensive quantity of psychical power exerted." A struggling sort of definition, conceived in the same strain, is thus formulated by Flögel:▲ "Genius is unquestionably an attribute of the faculty of cognition, for no inclination for an art or a science will induce us to say of the man that feels it that he has genius." This marvellous utterance is rendered somewhat more intelligible by the definition of the cognitive faculty that immediately follows it: "The faculty of cognition is a tree with many branches. Attention, memory, abstraction, wit, discrimination, understanding, and reason, by whatever names they may be called, belong to cognition. Experience shows that these different branches or parts are not all equally developed, but that one may in a given man preponderate over another. One man has more wit than discrimination; another has good sense but a poor memory; a third has a solid understanding but a deficiency of imagination. Thus,

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* L'Abbé Du Bos. Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture, 2d part, section 1. "On appelle génie, l'aptitude qu'un homme a reçu de la nature pour faire bien et facilement certaines choses que les autres ne sauroient faire que très mal, même en prenant beaucoup de peine."

† Theorie der schönen Künste und Wissenschaften, ed. of 1767, p. 391.

‡ Logik und Metaphysik.

* Metaphysica, § 648. "Determinata facultatum cognoscitiuarum proportio inter se in aliquo est ingenium."

‖ Ursache des gesunkenen Geschmacks bei den verschiedenen Völkern, da er geblüht, 1775, p. 62.

▲ Karl Friedrich Flögel. Geschichte des menschlichen Verstandes.

there is a certain degree of repugnancy between a man's different cognitive powers; and it is their proportion which constitutes a man's genius in its widest sense. In this sense every man has his genius." He continues thus: "We are accustomed to deny genius to numberless men. We deny it to learned men who have written libraries; and it would be equally out of place to speak of an author as a genius who had only written a few pages in which a moderate enthusiasm was displayed. We associate the term genius with something great, something superior in its way. Whatever capacity in a man seems great, pre-eminent, of singular force, distinguishing him from average brains, is called genius, without qualification. If this superiority belongs to all he does, we say the man has universal genius; if it is confined to certain directions, we call it special or peculiar genius." Wieland * divides genius into three kinds: the genius of pleasing, which operates within the domain of the graces and consists in a special facility for carrying out the ideas it prosecutes; philosophical genius, which consists in a capacity for discovering those truths resulting from correct conceptions which concern the felicity of mankind; and practical genius, which consists in a ready activity in availing itself of known facts and in producing the highest and most prompt resolutions. But there is no psychological foundation for this arbitrary division of the phenomena. Here, again, it is the mere greatness and pre-eminence of the achievements, without reference to their psychical origin, which is made to constitute the essence of genius. H. Joly † says that genius is "creative power, using this term in the relative sense in which alone it is permissible to apply it. It is the production of something which the combined efforts of other men have hitherto been powerless to effect. It is that which

* Betrachtungen über den Menschen.

† Psychologie des grands hommes. Originally published in the Revue Philosophique.

puts at the disposition of humanity either means of expression, or means of talent and invention, or means of new action, which add something to the common intelligence and common power."

The conception of genius of all these authors is even in conflict with that of ordinary language, for which genius and talent are qualitatively different. If those authors are right, genius and talent are merely different degrees of the same quality. However this may be, according to the above definition, the word genius has, generally speaking, not much value as a psychological term.

The inadequacy of such a view to meet the popular notion being recognised, efforts have been made to find something specially characteristic of genius. A great many philosophers have taken originality to be such a characteristic. Weise * says: "All writers upon genius agree that invention is its essential mark." Many authors seem quite to forget that the point is to establish a psychological conception, proceeding rather as if they had to accord a title or order for some special service. Thus Alexander Gerard † adopts the view that everybody who makes an invention,

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* Ferdinand Christoph Weise. Allgemeine Theorie des Genies.

† An Essay on Genius, 1774. "Genius is properly the faculty of invention, by means of which a man is qualified for making new discoveries in science, or for producing original works of art. We may ascribe taste, judgment, or knowledge to a man who is incapable of invention, but we can not reckon him as a man of genius. In order to determine how far he merits this character (!) we must inquire whether he has discovered any new principle in science, or has invented any new art, or has carried those arts that are already practised to a higher degree of perfection than former masters; or whether, at least, he has, in matters of science, improved upon the discoveries of his predecessors, or reduced principles formerly known to a greater degree of simplicity and consistency, or traced them through a train of consequences hitherto unknown; or in the arts, whether he has designed some new work different from those of his predecessors, though not perhaps excelling them (!). Whatever falls short of this is servile imitation or a dull effort of plodding industry, which, as not implying invention, can be deemed no proof of genius, whatever capacity, skill, or diligence it may evidence. But if a man shows invention, no intellectual defects (!) which his performance may betray can forfeit his claim to genius. His invention may be irregular, wild, undisciplined; but

whether valuable or useless, and everybody who has an original idea of any description, must be a genius. According to this, any fool who gives birth to original absurdities must be reckoned as a genius. In conflict with those passages is the subsequent remark of the same author, that "invention is the capacity of producing new beauties in works of art and new truths in matters of science." Apart from the arbitrary character of this definition of the word "invention," it is in distinct conflict with the above extract, which does not harmonize with such a definition.

Many authors express substantially the same opinion. Flögel,* for example, says: "Down to Newton the colorific effects of prisms had probably been looked upon as a pretty amusement for children, unworthy the attention of philosophers; but that great mind founded upon these phenomena that acute theory of colours which by itself would have sufficed to win for him the title of genius had he been great (?) in nothing else." The author talks as if genius were a rank like that of major or privy counsellor. Kant,† too, quotes with approval the definition of genius as the "exemplary originality of a man's talent." Hagen‡ says: "Originality, therefore, constitutes genius. . . . To me, accordingly, genius is the synonym of mind, but with the implication that the mental idiosyncrasy of the supereminent individual is intended. . . . Now, in so far as every man has a mental individuality, he has a mind distinct from every other and is an original thinker. He has a mind of his own. . . . By genius, in the narrow and ordinary sense, we mean a mind of the first order endowed with a high

still it is regarded as an infallible mark of real natural genius (!), and the degree of this faculty that we ascribe to him is always in proportion to the novelty, the difficulty, and the dignity of his inventions."

* Geschichte des menschlichen Verstandes.

† Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht, 1798, § 55.

‡ Ueber die Verwandtschaft des Genies mit dem Irrsinn, in the Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie, vol. xxxiii.

originality of conception, of discovery, and of creative impulse."

This conception of genius may, perhaps, accord better with common language than the previous one. At any rate, it furnishes the requisite qualitative distinction between genius and talent. Our present study, however, is not ordinary language. We are inquiring whether this definition creates a precise psychological concept of scientific value. Now, the concept of originality has nothing to do with psychical characteristics; it refers exclusively to outward facts. Originality may be produced by the most diverse psychical processes; and the same dispositions of mind may in one case lead to originality and in another not; since this is in no small measure an accident of the outward situation. A child is original at the period when its mind is awakening, when the more complex ideas of the world have not yet been apprehended, but primitive images are in his artless fashion fused together. That is why the speeches of children so often seem witty and excite smiles on the faces of the grown people who hear them. When we say a man is an "original" we often mean to imply that he is weak-minded and deficient in perception, not clearly understanding situations, and all his life long a foreigner to the world. So are those conceited fools original who, because their behaviour and propensities depart widely from commonsense, live in perpetual astonishment at their own genius. For example, the author of a recent book, intended to convince society that clothes should be discarded and men and women should go naked, was a genius, according to Gerard's definition. A man publishes far and wide that he can cure all the ills that flesh is heir to by simply making people walk about barefoot over wet meadows. What a genius! And the prophet's success, too, as regards the main chance, shows that the multitude honor him as a genius.

As we have seen, it has not taken long to learn that

originality does not *per se* constitute genius. Hence common consent has agreed more accurately to define and limit the "originality of genius." But in doing this, merely the outward phenomenon is treated; and in the most favorable circumstances some symptom only comes to be considered, instead of the causes and source of the fact being reached. To originality is added the further condition that "beauties" and "truths" (as Gerard said) must be produced to entitle it to the name of genius. So Weise* says: "Genius is the immediate attraction of an individual in the harmonious concurrence of his mental and physical powers to the production of an ideal and typical work of intellect." Many authors require that genius shall be "epoch-making," that its achievements shall be "agreeable" or "useful," etc. Gerard demands that artistic genius shall "please" and shall "gratify the taste": "Objects and circumstances unfit to please, either do not at all occur to the artist or, being perceived at a glance to be unfit, are immediately rejected." Dr. Blair says in his Lectures on Rhetoric (written about 1760), Lecture III:

"Genius always imports something inventive or creative, which does not rest in mere sensibility to beauty where it is perceived, but which can, moreover, produce new beauties, and exhibit them in such a manner as strongly to impress the minds of others."

Thus, instead of returning to psychical causes, in such attempts to particularize the conditions, authors depart further and further from those causes, and dwell more and more upon the invention of others. Is there anything "beautiful" or "good" *per se?* Do these words express anything but a conformity to the ideas that are in fashion, but which at different periods vary monstrously? Is taste anything more than a personal preference? If the term

* Ferdinand Christoph Weise. Allgemeine Theorie des Genies.

genius is to be made contingent upon such wavering standards and the variable feelings of others, it must follow that many an individual will at certain periods of history be pronounced a genius to whom other generations will deny the epithet. So genius will lose all meaning as a psychological term; for if it is to be any character of the mind, the conception of it must be constructed and defined from within, and not be dependent upon outward circumstances.

Upon such outward circumstances originality is in part essentially dependent. Many great and useful discoveries and inventions have been due to accident solely. Many investigators have by a happy concatenation of circumstances been led into a line of study which has brought them to discoveries which have remained hidden from much higher minds. When the microscope was first discovered it was only necessary to apply it to any tissue of living matter to make great and important discoveries. So, too, as a matter of fact, a large number of discoveries are ascribed to persons who, under conditions other than those under which they were made, might perhaps in no way have particularly distinguished themselves. The possibility of originality is in many branches of art narrowly limited; and the chance of being original depends very much upon how far precursors have exhausted the department. In practical music we speak of a "brilliant rendering" (*geniale Auffassung*). Now, I ask whether a musician who executes a sonata of Beethoven according to his conception of it, is less a genius because others before him have had the same idea of it. Or is a musician a genius because, in his desire to be original and to be applauded as a genius, he does not reproduce the work of the composer, but rather a parody upon it? Often enough this is actually done nowadays.

Those inquirers who have sought to penetrate to the psychological laws of genius, and have sought to explain its phenomena upon recognised psychological principles, have

been obliged at last to acknowledge that they had to do with the most diverse psychical conditions, which have been promiscuously labelled as genius. Even Gerard, in his psychological analysis, found himself at last compelled to recognise two essentially different varieties of genius—"genius for science" and "genius for the arts."* But he shows very plainly the error into which he had fallen. Instead of recognising that these two classes refer to utterly unlike psychical conditions, he again resorts to external circumstances to explain their difference, saying: "Some difference between genius for science and genius for the arts arises necessarily from the very diversity of their ends."† This is obviously putting the cart before the horse. He ought rather to say, "The diversity of their ends arises from different sources—genius for science and genius for the arts."

Helvetius‡ likewise comes to the conclusion that different kinds of genius differ psychologically. "Few men have perceived that these metaphors (fire, inspiration, etc.), applicable to certain kinds of genius, such as that for poetry and for eloquence, are not at all so to the genius for reflection, such as that of Locke and Newton." But, in spite of his quite correct view that the psychical conditions requisite for a man of science and a poet are utterly different, he nevertheless endeavours to frame a definition which shall include both these dissimilar cases.* Instead, therefore, of accounting for phenomena in scientific concepts, he avails himself of a loose usage of speech as the guide of his

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* *Loc. cit.*, p. 318.

† P. 319. ‡ De l'esprit, 1758. Discours 4me., chap. i.

* "To gain an exact definition of the word genius, and in general of the aggregate of different names given to mind, we must rise to wider ideas, and for this purpose we must lend an attentive ear to the judgments of the public. . . . The public ranks as men of genius alike the Descartes, the Newtons, the Lockes, the Montesquieus, the Corneilles, the Molières, etc. The name genius given to men so different supposes that there is some common quality in which they agree."

inquiries, and so comes to the conclusion that "invention" and the "making of an epoch" are the kernel of all genius.

Radestock,* to mention one more among many, expresses a similar opinion: "And yet there are certain characteristics common to all genius—to wit, originality and the height of creative power. Different kinds of genius are only distinguished in a secondary manner by their objects and the spheres within which they are exercised." Here is the same inversion of cause and effect as in Gerard.

Investigation having made it clear that common language throws together under the one head of genius elements the most heterogeneous, science reaches this parting of the ways—either to discard the concept entirely as scientifically useless, or to limit it to one definitely describable combination of psychological conditions.

Kant and Schopenhauer, recognising this fact, restricted genius to art. Schopenhauer† showed that totally different psychical conditions would make an artist on the one hand, and a man of learning on the other; so that it was not admissible to call them both by the same name. Here is one of his remarks: "The work of genius has always been regarded as an inspiration, as the word itself implies, as the work of a superhuman being different from the person and only periodically taking possession of him. Experience shows, too, that the greatest artistic geniuses have no capacity for mathematics. There never lived a man distinguished in both particulars. Alfieri relates that he never could advance beyond the fourth proposition of Euclid. Goethe has been reproached enough with his lack of mathematical knowledge. Thus, also, is explained the notorious want of artistic sensibility in all distinguished mathematicians. A great French mathematician, on hearing the Iphigénie of

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* Paul Radestock. Genie und Wahnsinn.

† Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, vol. i, Book III, § 36, and vol. ii, cap. xxxi.

Racine, exclaimed, 'What does that prove?' Great genius is seldom combined with predominance of reason; on the contrary, men of genius are particularly subject to overpowering sentiments and irrational passions."

It must be confessed that the limitation of genius to artistic power has met with general disapprobation among the later authors who have written upon the subject. Jürgen Bona Meyer* assures us that there is such a thing as scientific genius; and so do other authors who have not reconciled themselves to this limitation of the common mode of speech. Since Kant and Schopenhauer, people continue to attribute genius to scientists, just as they did before.

Thus the question whether the popular word genius can be used as a scientific term can only be decided by a psychological analysis of those poets, composers, painters, virtuosos, actors, scholars, statesmen, and generals who have generally been reckoned as geniuses. That analysis performed, comparison will show whether they have any common characteristic, such as justifies us in comprehending such persons under one psychological concept.

Famous poets, observant of their own inward conditions, have often said that their works were composed as in a dream, unknown to themselves; that, instead of being deliberately constructed, their ideas have, as it were, flown to them.

Goethe says: "There is a sense in which it is true that poets, and indeed all true artists, must be born, not made. Namely, there must be an inward productive power to bring the images that linger in the organs, in the memory, in the imagination, freely, without purpose or will, to life. The ideas must unfold themselves, grow, extend, and accumulate in order to become no longer fugitive diagrams, but living pictures."

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* Jürgen Bona Meyer. Genie und Talent, Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaften, B. xi.

Voltaire, on seeing one of his tragedies performed, exclaimed: "Was it really I who wrote that?" Lamartine said: "It is not I who think, but my ideas which think for me." Of Werther, Goethe said: "Having written this little book somewhat unconsciously, like a sleepwalker, I could not help wondering, in lately reading it over, whether I should find anything in it to alter and improve."

Schiller writes to Körner: "It is not well in works of creation that reason should too closely challenge the ideas that come thronging to the doors. Taken by itself, an idea may be highly unsuitable, even venturesome, and yet in conjunction with others, themselves equally absurd alone, it may furnish a suitable link in the chain of thought. Reason can not see this unless it carefully considers the idea in its connections. In a creative brain reason has withdrawn her watch at the doors, and ideas crowd in pell-mell."

Bettinelli says: "The happy moment for the poet may be called a dream—dreamed in the presence of the intellect, which stands by and gazes with open eyes at the performance."

"Schiller," says Vischer, in his treatise upon Esthetics,* "annotating a passage in Schelling, energetically requires that the poet should begin his work unconsciously, and says that he ought to consider himself fortunate if, after a consecutive and distinct consideration of what he is about, he does not find himself set back, or if he finds his finished work as good as the obscure but powerful impression from which he set out. Schiller himself, who fluttered midway between thought and intuition, complains that theory and criticism quench his ardour, and that when he sees himself at work creating and constructing, his imagination is embarrassed, and does not perform with the same freedom as it had done when nobody was looking over its shoulder."

* Friedrich Theodor Vischer. Aesthetik; oder Wissenschaft des Schönen, 1846.

Jean Paul Richter had, perhaps, the above passage of Goethe in his mind when he wrote:* "Genius is, in more senses than one, a sleepwalker, and in its bright dream can accomplish what one who woke could never do. It mounts every height of reality in the dark; but bring it out of its world of dreams, and it stumbles." The last clause contains an observation that Goethe also had made upon himself and which he describes as follows: "It had happened to me so often that I would repeat a song to myself and then be unable to recollect it; that sometimes I would run to my desk and, without taking time to lay my paper straight, would, without stirring from my place, write out the poem from beginning to end, slopingly. For the same reason I always preferred to write with a pencil, on account of its marking so readily. On several occasions, indeed, the scratching and spluttering of my pen awoke me from my somnambulistic poetizing and distracted me so that it suffocated a little product in its birth. I had a particular reverence for such pieces, like a hen for her brood of chickens pipping around her."

Klopstock says himself that he got many of the ideas of his Messiah in dreams.

Voltaire wrote to Diderot:† "It must be confessed that in the arts of genius instinct is everything. Corneille composed the scene between Horatius and Curiatius just as a bird builds its nest, except that the bird always builds well, while with us poor feeble little creatures that is not the case."

Upon what does this instinctive creating, this unconscious poetizing, this spontaneous emerging of thought, that we meet with in so many great poets, depend?

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* Vorschule der Aesthetik, § 12, Besonnenheit.

† 1773, April 20. "Il faut avouer que dans les arts de génie, tout est l'ouvrage de l'instinct. Corneille fit la scène d'Horace et de Curiace comme un oiseau fait son nid, à cela près qu'un oiseau fait toujours bien, et qu'il n'en est pas de même de nous autres chétifs."

In our first chapter we recognised two different kinds of processes of thought—voluntary thinking, in which the sequence of ideas is determined by the will, and involuntary thinking, which takes place in a purely associative way. This last we may term *fancy*. The two processes have, in truth, no sharp delimitation. We may conceive the process of thought to be an action of fancy with varying activity of the will, from the weakest to the strongest grade. So Wundt* speaks of an active and a passive fancy. "Our fancy," says he, "is passive when we allow the play of ideas to go as it will, beginning with any complete idea. It is active when our will sifts out the ideas that are produced, and thus purposively brings about a new whole." In the present work we shall use the word *fancy* without qualification to denote a passive involuntary train of ideas; while a purposive sequence of ideas, or voluntary thought, shall be termed *intellectual function* (*Verstandesthätigkeit*).

Involuntary thought is frequently described by the poets as unconscious. That can not be accurate, for "unconscious thought" is a contradictory phrase. Not even a dream can be said to be unconscious, whether it be purely ideal, like most dreams, or produce action, as in sleepwalking. In such a state self-consciousness alone is suspended, not consciousness itself. It is true that § 51 of the German criminal code pronounces actions performed unconsciously to be unpunishable; but that is psychologically incorrect. A person is unconscious in a deep swoon or occasionally in a stupor. But actions are never performed without being connected with ideas; this it is that distinguishes them from automatic and reflex motions. Now, ideas form a part of consciousness. Ideas without consciousness are therefore inconceivable. The paragraph of the criminal code ought

* Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie.

to read: "Actions performed while self-consciousness is suspended shall not be punished." So when a poet tells us he has composed verses while in a state of unconsciousness or as in a dream, similar considerations show how we are to understand his language.

Fancy stands half-way between dreaming and active intellectual function. The latter depends directly on the will, while in the former the will is in total abeyance. Purposive thought is like a ship with a strong rudder which follows every turning and winding and can be carried through the narrowest straits. A dream is a rudderless hulk wandering hither and thither, the play of the winds and waves. Fancy is a ship which, with its sails set, wends its way over the deep, moving like a ghost with no visible impulse, yet directed toward its destined port. The will takes part in fancy, but behaves more passively than actively. It removes all hindrances which might confuse the thoughts and prevent ideas from forming a harmonious whole.

All men exercise the above-described action of fancy. In ordinary men it makes daydreams, which everybody recognises to be opposed to purposive thought. All that fancy produces depends on former impressions of sense. It is powerless to create anything new; its products are mere combinations in memory of the residua of former impressions. They may be unlikely enough, and in that sense it may be true that its products are "original." But this does not conflict with the facts alleged.

As in a kaleidoscope a relatively small number of bits of broken glass can enter into most manifold combinations and produce the most diverse images, so the residua of former impressions of sense can, by means of fancy, combine into the most variegated mixture of original ideas. If a kaleidoscope contains only a small number of morsels of glass of tolerably large size, the images will be relatively monotonous and small in variety; but if it contains smaller and

more numerous pieces of glass, the images will be more manifold and more variegated. In an analogous way, a rich fancy, as we call it, is able to dissect the sense-impressions that are received into their smallest constituents, and to fuse them together into infinitely numerous new shapes. If this faculty is combined with a great facility of association and imagination, it will result in that lively and creative action of fancy which we find in the poet.

The daydreams of ordinary men are mostly uninteresting. But in a man with a cultivated and refined fancy, daydreams will bring those creative thoughts of genius, in which fancy reveals itself *a posteriori* to his knowledge. Hence it is that he seems to himself to have created his ideas unawares. He seems, like an objective spectator, to see the poem spring up within him.

This state of fancy, which depends upon an ordinary psychical process, not qualitatively different from the mental process of common men, but only differing quantitatively, is that which gave rise to mystical explanations and to the belief in supernatural processes. Kant remarks: "The reason why exemplary originality of talent receives that mystical title is that the subject of it can not himself explain its eruptions, or that he finds himself in possession of an art which he could not have learned and which he can not comprehend. For invisibility (the cause of an effect) is an attribute of the mind (a genius with which the gifted person is endowed from his birth) whose inspiration, as it were, he only follows." So Vischer says: "We apply to it the name of inspiration, an expression recalling a mystical idea, the flow of which only begins here to grow into a river in its further advance. The ancients, for whom the unknown upon the limits of self-knowledge appeared so strange as to be the work of God, thought it was really inspiration. The poet is inflated with the Muse, he is ἔνθεος, θεόπνευστος, κατεχόμενος, ἐκστατικός, he is snatched away by the goddess ὑπὸ θείης

ἐξαλλαγῆς, out of himself, ἔξω ἑαυτοῦ, he is breathed upon, ἐπίπνοια."

It is this creative and somewhat independent power of fancy which lends to the work of art its character of originality; and hence it is that many inquirers have found in that the essence of genius.

Garve * expresses himself emphatically upon this point. "Nothing," he says, "is harder to ascertain than the peculiarity of a particular mind, especially of a great mind, and most of all of a genius. All perfections of the mind consist in certain perfections of thoughts; or, rather, we only know as many differences and superiorities of capacities and powers as we find of differences and grades of eminence in the ideas. There is hardly any way to describe the character of a capacity except by describing the origin and mode of formation of the thoughts which are peculiar to that faculty. This can only be done in so far as these thoughts follow other thoughts—i. e., are reflections and after-thoughts. But when they seem to spring immediately out of the power of the soul, when the higher or previous suggesting thoughts are not to be found even by the man who had the idea in question, our inquiry comes to an end, as inquiries always do when, in place of tracing one effect from another, we are brought up to the actual force. Now, thoughts of that kind are precisely such as are ascribed to genius, a word signifying the source of those ideas which have not been gradually elaborated, but have sprung up in a night from the soil of the soul."

Jürgen Bona Meyer says: "Talent, being self-conscious, knows the why and wherefore of its conclusions and principles. But for genius all that is in darkness. Nothing is more unconscious and involuntary than the process of thought of genius."

* Garve. Anmerkungen über Gellert.

Although, as we shall soon see, this creative fancy is not sufficient by itself to produce a poetic genius, and, as we shall at the same time see, the degree of its development is not always proportional to the greatness of the poet, yet it must be granted that the action of fancy is an indispensable psychical ingredient of every poet. We are confirmed in this opinion by the fact that those poets who only possess it in small or inconsiderable amounts themselves lament the want of it as a misfortune. When Lessing confesses there is no living spring within him which wells up fresh, rich, and pure, but that everything has to be pumped up with straining and groaning, he simply denies his own possession of the proper organ of poesy. Schiller complained that theory and criticism had damaged the free play of his fancy. When Wieland had once reproached him with want of facility he wrote: "While I am at work I feel only too keenly that he is right; yet I feel, too, where the fault lies, and I hope that I shall be able to improve very much in that respect. Ideas do not flow richly enough to me, however luxuriant my works turn out; and until I write them down my ideas are not clear."

Here, then, is a very important mental difference between poets of high rank. While in Goethe the mainstay of his artistic power was the free play of fancy, with Schiller the turning point was a power of intellectual function which, in his own words, often choked the luxuriance of his fancy.

From this fact we can draw the corollary that however indispensable to a poet fancy may be, it is not a synonym of poetic greatness; for Schiller is undeniably a greater poet than many another whose fancy is under no such intellectual inhibition.

The psychological analysis of famous poets will show that the intellectual function is no whit less important a factor of poetic genius than fancy itself, although the latter is the one immediately employed in the act of composition. We

have seen that creative fancy works with the material which former impressions of sense have left behind as their remains or residua. The more comprehensive the knowledge of the poet, therefore, and the more he is in condition to assimilate and compact the impressions the world conveys to him, and the sounder and truer his judgments of persons and situations, and the more methodical his thought and the better his memory, by so much the more will his fancy display luxuriance, and by so much more various will be his creations.

Lessing * falls into error when he says: "It is permitted to genius not to know a thousand things that every schoolboy knows; for it is not the provision with which his memory is stored, but what he can bring forth out of his own feeling, that constitutes his wealth." On the contrary, the really great poet is usually marked by solid erudition and thorough comprehension of the world. Of course, there are fools enough who fancy they need learn nothing, that their genius has only to walk forth naked in its own stately form, and that erudition would be but a detriment to its creativeness. But these are unfortunates, of whom we shall treat in another chapter of this book. Goethe hit them off in the following epigram:

Says Zigzag, in his latest book,
"Within no school have I a nook;
From living wight no thoughts I've took;
Still less to dead men do I look."
He means, unless I've much mistook,
"I'm just a crank on my own hook." †

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* Hamburgische Dramaturgie, 34tes Stück.

† Ein Quidam sagt: "Ich bin von keiner Schule;
Kein Meister lebt, mit dem ich buhle;
Auch bin ich weit davon entfernt
Dass ich von Todten was gelernt."
Das heisst, wenn ich ihn recht verstand:
"Ich bin ein Narr, auf eigne Hand."

Kant, too, says that genius must undergo the "constraint of the school" (*Zwang des Studiums*). "To free imagination from this constraint and to allow one's peculiar talent to rove about in wild disorder, contrary to the laws of Nature, might betoken, perhaps, a great original madness."

Goethe very clearly pictures the sources from which his own rich fancy drew the materials of its creations. "The greatest genius would be worthless without external aids. For what, after all, is genius but the capacity to seize every opportunity, to make use of everything that falls in our way, to impart form and life to whatever matter may be put within its reach, to take here marble, there earth, and out of them to build a lasting monument? Where, for example, should I be, or what would be left of me, if that sort of appropriation should cast a prejudice upon genius? What have I done? I have gathered and used whatever I have seen, heard, or observed. I have laid claim to the works of Nature and of man. To every one of my writings a thousand persons and a thousand different things have contributed. Old and young, gentle and simple, wise and foolish have brought their quotas. Mostly without being aware of it, they have bestowed upon me their thoughts, their faculties, and their experiences, sowing the grain that I have reaped. My work is an assemblage of essences which have been derived from the course of Nature. This bears the name of 'Goethe.' . . . Foolish men! They remind me of a certain philosopher of my part of the country who fancied that if he were to imprison himself in his study for thirty years, and there sift and beat out the ideas which he would draw from his own poor brain, he would obtain a wonderful mine of originality! What came of it, think ye? Clouds, and only clouds! . . . I was long enough so silly as to grieve over these absurdities; but now in my old age I

may be permitted to make merry over them and laugh at them." *

Another psychical phenomenon, besides fancy and intellectual function, surprises us in famous poets—to wit: a refinement of the feelings, heart, and moods. We often find these qualities developed in great poets to a point we can scarcely imagine. The mere contemplation of a work of art may move them to tears. In Heine, music produced a peculiar mood which excited him to versification. Alfieri described his mood while writing poetry as a sort of soft fever. When Goethe read in Schiller's family for the first time the scene between Hermann and his mother under the pear tree, in Hermann und Dorothea, he burst into tears, saying, as he dried his eyes, "One melts over one's own fire."

Schiller wrote to Goethe: "At first my sensations have no definite object; that is formed later. First comes a certain musical sensation, and after that, follows the poetical idea."

What is described here is, as fancy, not a new, independent, or mystical condition, peculiar to certain individuals, but is merely a refinement of a certain part of the psychical organism, and consequently a mere alteration of intensity of a phenomenon observable in all men.

Our whole mental action, the train of ideas, voluntary or involuntary, is accompanied with a certain state of temper, best termed a *mood* (*Stimmung*), to which I have referred in the first chapter. As we are not ordinarily conscious of any feelings produced by our internal organs, so, in spite of their continuous presence, we are not commonly aware of our moods. We recognise them only as they vary. Different authors are at variance in regard to the connection between our moods and our ideas. Some will have the moods

* Entgegnung auf Äusserungen Französischer Journalisten.

dependent upon the ideas, while others make the content of the ideas follow the mood of the moment. My own opinion is that neither rule can be maintained, but that moods and ideas react upon one another, at one time a mood taking the lead, at another an idea. When sad news is received, a gloomy mood is plainly a consequence of the ideas; yet it is not to be denied that we have many ups and downs of mood for which no differences of ideas can account. Such moods are called *humours*.

It is well known that the multitude of qualitative differences of sense-perceptions exceeds every finite number. Not only can we perceive differences in the intensity of lights, but we can distinguish the most manifold shades of colour. Sounds differ not merely in intensity and in pitch, but also in the quality of tone. We not only hear upon what instrument a given note is sounded, but a connoisseur can tell upon what string of a violin it is drawn. Hence we recognise the voice of one acquaintance among hundreds.

The quality of a sensation can not be described in words. No doubt, we have names for the coarsest distinctions; but even these have a value only when they are brought into connection with previous impressions. A person blind from birth can in no way whatever get any idea of a distinction of colour. Nor can a deaf-mute get the most distant notion of the differences of qualities of sounds.

In strict analogy with sense-perception, the fundamentally different qualities of moods are likewise too multitudinous to be enumerated. Neither can they be described in words. We have names for certain states, and these names may suggest previous experiences of our states of mind. Compunction, pity, desire, worry, hope, fear, though they have names, are sensations and moods that no descriptions can paint. If a person had never felt pity in his life, you could in no way give him an idea of that mood.

Persons whose psychical organism is highly refined in this

respect will have qualities of moods that there are no words to express. Just as the musically gifted can distinguish timbres that ordinary people can not, so those persons have mood-feelings for which the average man is incapable, and for which common language has no designations. Alfieri's "soft fever" and Schiller's "a certain musical mood of the heart" are obviously attempts to convey some notion of such refined mood-feelings.

Another trait remarkable in famous poets is an instinctive and invincible impulse to express the ideas and feelings within them. In consequence of this impulse the work of genius is not a voluntary labour, but the involuntary product of a psychical need. It is not a hankering after applause and success, nor a regard for his other interests, which induces the man of genius to perform his task. It is solely a passion to give shape and form to the idea that exists in his fancy. The true poet does not versify because he would, but because he must. Goethe has painted the poetic impulse in Tasso:

> *Alfonso.* I beg of thee to break this habit up!
> The poet's loss will be the man's success.
> *Tasso.* I've struggled day and night against this need;
> I'm worn out trying to shut up my breast.
> 'Tis useless! Sing I must; else life's not life.
> Prohibit the poor silkworm's industry
> On pain of death, yet still he'll keep right on
> Drawing the costly web from his entrails,
> Nor cease until his golden cerecloth's wove.—Act V, scene 2.

This impulse of the poet of genius is again merely an exaggerated case of a purely physiological phenomenon found in all men. In every man strong emotions and powerful motions of the heart exercise a great influence upon his whole mental conduct. But the effects of emotions are not limited to the mind. They are centrifugally communicated to the other organs. They have spasmodic and paralytic

effects upon the blood vessels, which are shown by blanching and blushing, cold down the back (shivers and goose-flesh), etc. The beating of the heart may be increased to the highest point or may be completely suspended. Glandular secretions, sweat, and tears are influenced by moods. The emotions are alleviated by such processes. The mood becomes calmer, the whole state of mind more agreeable. A decided relief is brought to great mental pain by tears, and a person may even speak of having "a good cry." Anger is softened by "having it out," be it even on a lifeless thing. Hysterical subjects and children strike or kick the object against which they may have struck. Cheerful emotions also seek "vent." A comical emotion sets the laughing muscles in motion, and this is followed by a calmer mood.

The impulse to give expression to emotions and moods is not only shown in such reflex ways, but also in an intense desire for communication to other persons. The consequence of "telling all about it" is a measurable unburdening or relaxation which produces satisfaction. Thus, all men have a natural impulse to communicate their inward feelings and sensations. The suppression of it involves a tension, a heightening of the emotion, and a general uneasiness. A pain which circumstances forbid us to disclose, especially where tears have to be suppressed, is felt more intensely. Suppressed anger "gnaws the vitals" all the worse. The suppression of laughter is very uncomfortable, and for some persons quite impossible. Everybody knows how hard it is for women (shall we add for men?) to keep a secret.

When a woman has a piece of news, she "burns" to repeat it. Everybody suffering from the pangs of love feels much relieved when he has confessed his passion. Everybody experiences relief, when he bears a grudge against anybody, on "speaking his mind" about him. Criminals are not seldom led by an inward impulse to confess offences committed long before. Thus, this impulse, which I shall

term the impulse of revelation, is a quite normal one, and belongs in some measure to every man.

In poets of genius, who have such manifold feelings and moods, and in whose rich fancy so many new thoughts and ideas are continually springing up, this impulse is proportionately manifest. But since, as we have seen, the feelings and moods of the poet cannot be described in simple words, art is required to give utterance to them. Such a poet no more writes for the sake of making poetry than a rational man talks for the sake of talking; he creates his work of art solely to the end that he may give utterance to the sentiments, feelings, and thoughts with which his soul is burdened. If he finds his work has no success nor recognition, he of course feels the same pain that any man would feel who wants to express himself to somebody and is understood by nobody. But he is incapable of altering anything in his work or reshaping it for a new edition. He can only be what he is. He feels himself incapable of creating anything but the embodiment of his ideas and sentiments.

Such a poet was Goethe. Art was for him only the means of expression of his sentiments. He expressed in poetic form only what really took place within himself, what he really lived, felt, and experienced. He himself said: "All my poems are occasional poems. They were called forth by real circumstances and have their reason and place therein. I never valued poems snatched out of the air. A special situation is universal and poetic, simply because a poet treats of it. What I did not undergo and what did not concern me I have never sung or expressed. I never wrote love poems without being in love." And again he said: "If I desired for my poems a true basis and reflection, I had to get it in my own bosom. And so began that habit—from which I have never departed through life—of converting whatever rejoiced, or worried, or otherwise concerned me into a poem and so have done with it, and thus at once to

correct my conceptions of outward things and to set my mind at rest. The gift for doing so could be to nobody more needful than to me; for my nature was always swaying from one extreme to another. Thus, all I have published are but fragments of a long confession."

In Goethe the most diverse moods replaced one another. As he says, he passed from one extreme to another. To give them expression was the motive of his artistic production. The matter of his creations was furnished by his creative fancy, which in its turn took its material from the world in which he lived and into which he had such an insight as no other had. Thus, as often as his relations in life altered, he would alter the plan of his Wilhelm Meister, as he describes it in the following words: "Its beginnings came from a dim premonition that though a man may often essay things whose successful performance was denied to him by Nature, yet perhaps all false steps really carry him toward a priceless good. This conjecture is in Wilhelm Meister developed, illustrated, established, and at last expressly enunciated in the clear words, 'Thou appearest to me like Saul, the son of Kis, who went out to fetch his father's she-asses and found a kingdom.'" The following is likewise highly instructive: "For this purpose I collected the elements that I had been turning over in my mind for a couple of years, and examined the cases which had troubled me the most and occasioned me the most anxiety. However, nothing seemed to shape itself. I was in want of an incident or plot in which things could embody themselves. Finally, I got news of Jerusalem's death; and just after the general notice came a precise and circumstantial account of the event. In an instant the remainder of the plan was found. Everything closed up on all sides and became a compact mass. It was like water in a vessel just on the point of freezing, which at the least joggle becomes a solid lump of ice." His joys and sorrows, his desires, his

pleasures and pains were exhibited by Goethe in the heroes of his poems. In their veins flowed his blood, they breathed with his lungs, and they lived by his life.

Dilthey* says: "The poetic process is in most of Goethe's creations the same. A state of heart is powerfully experienced in the whole outer situation, with all the ideas, states, and shapes surrounding it, and since now the inwardly moved poet meets an outward condition fit to be made the vehicle of the experiences of his heart, there arises in this coalescence the nucleus of a poem which at once contains in itself all characteristic traits, the entire mood, the lines of the whole."

In giving artistic expression to his own sentiments and his own fancy, Goethe painted the sentiments and reactions of society. The reason was that his soul was but the mirror of the world in which he lived. The greatness of the poet consisted precisely in this accidental correspondence; and when he painted his own woes and joys he was painting unawares the woes and joys of humanity. Goethe himself touches upon this in the following words: "There is all the difference in the world between the poet's seeking out the particular to fit the general, and showing the general in the particular. The former method gives rise to allegory, where the particular is only an example of the general; but the latter method is the proper nature of poetry. It expresses a particular without thinking of the general or referring to it. Whoever catches the particular in all its life will have set his finger upon the universal without at first knowing what he has captured."

This method of poetic creation is not, however, found in all poets. Art is not always an expression of sentiments and feelings. Poets as famous as Goethe have worked under

* Wilhelm Dilthey. Ueber die Einbildungskraft der Dichter. Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft, vol. x.

totally different psychical conditions, and have created in an altogether different way.

Such a difference is found in those two men whom the German people with just pride hold to be the greatest poets of the century. Between scarcely any two poets have so many parallels been drawn as between Goethe and Schiller. Critics of to-day often rate Goethe higher than Schiller, and make him the greater of the two poets. But from the psychological standpoint we are forced to the conviction that there is between them a difference other than one of degree. Were Schiller raised to an ever so much higher power (if an algebraical metaphor may be permitted), he could never become a Goethe, but he might become a Shakespeare.

While Goethe took "in his own bosom" the poetic basis of his works, Schiller placed the germs of his poems in the outer world. While Goethe conceived poetry as merely the means of utterance of his sentiments, and hence spoke of his writings as "fragments of a long confession," Schiller declares the purpose of poesy to be "none other than the completest expression of humanity." While Goethe's heroes were made of his own flesh and blood, Schiller's fancy produced, idealized and generalized embodiments of characters he had observed and studied in the outward world. Schiller attached an intrinsic value to the outward habiliments of poetry, the sonorous and metaphorical language, the melody of verse, the plot of the drama. Goethe regarded the outward form as the mere "*Machwerk*"—the make-up—and of course did not finish and polish his works with the same care as Schiller. Of his Wallenstein, Schiller said: "Almost everything is cut away from me by which I might get at this matter in my usual way. Everything has to be effectuated by a felicitous form." The construction of the form sufficed to bring him inspiration, though he could take no real interest in his personages. Speaking of the same drama in a letter, he says: "The matter is so alien to me that I

can hardly get up an interest in it. It leaves me well-nigh cold and indifferent. Yet I am enthusiastic over the work. Two personages excepted, for whom I have some sympathy, I treat the whole *dramatis personæ*, especially the leading character, with a mere artistic love, cold as charity; but I assure you, they shall not turn out any worse on this account." Goethe could never have brought himself to write in that fashion. When he had once given expression to his sentiments in a poetic rough-draught, he would often neglect it for years before he finished it.

"Goethe," says Hermann Grimm, "was in his inmost heart of quite the opposite way of thinking from Schiller. He acknowledged Schiller's importance, reverenced his earnest life, esteemed his greatness as a man. But as for what Schiller called poems, they were in Goethe's eyes not poetry at all. Schiller's poetical creating was foreign to Goethe. Schiller would begin by casting about for material. Then he worked it till he had made it plastic. Next, he laid his plans. These plans he placed before himself, and went to work, so many hours *per diem*, to construct his work, as a mason would build a palace, in strict conformity to the plan before him. That done, he took a contract with himself to put in the painting, the ornaments, and the furniture; and finally he cleaned the whole thing up, and opened it to the public. This thorough workmanship was Schiller's forte. He was a professional poet, and he excelled all other professional poets. Goethe appreciated this; but he could not practise it himself. He discussed the technical questions which are of importance in criticising poetry, and in producing it, too, with the utmost seriousness, but always as an outsider. Making verses was for him an inconceivable proceeding. Whoever applied to Goethe to know whether he ought to go into the poetical profession came to a fine quarter. Young persons with a turn for versification have an artless belief that there is somewhere an Areopagus from

which they may obtain a solemn and authoritative concession to make verses; and that thereupon they may be assured that their verses will meet with 'success'—that is, be read and admired. Goethe was only able to give an answer which threw them back upon a metaphor—that a silkworm had only to eat leaves, and the silk would surely not be in default. In short, he replied evasively, dissuasively, and hesitatingly. But Schiller would answer in good faith. He criticised the verses inclosed and required, if they would trust to him, that they should persevere industriously. Naturally, he warned them that the art of poetry must not be attempted unless the writer was prepared to dedicate his life to it, with other such admonitions of good sense." *

Schiller, for his part, considered poems which sprang from the author's personal feelings, which included Goethe's, as not, in the proper sense of the term, poetry. Concerning the few things he had himself done in that way Schiller said: "These verses are a mere natural utterance—a *Naturlaut*, as Herder would say—a note of pain, artless and comparatively formless. They are too true for the individual, to be called poetry proper; for in them the individual appeases his need and alleviates his burden, while in lyrics of another kind, carried away by a flood, he yields to the need of creating. The present lines give utterance to the sentiment from which they sprang and, after their kind, they make no further pretension."

These contrasts between the two poets did not rest upon any differences of principle, nor were they consequences of any divergence of theoretical views, but were due directly to differences of psychical mechanism.

Goethe in his prevailing moods was, as he describes himself, "tossed from one extreme to another."

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* Hermann Grimm, Goethe.

Now merry, now heart-cut,
Now thankful to be;
Or dangling uncertain
In flittering pain;
Exulting to heaven,
To death beaten down, etc.*

These words picture Goethe's life. His moods were capable of the finest gradations. They arose spontaneously; he could give no account of them. His luxuriant fancy was formed from feelings and moods and pressed forward to artistic embodiment.

Goethe is often a riddle to himself. He considered his fancy as an objective spectator. Its variegated mixture became the source of his poetic ideas. But his strong intellectual power set limits to the rovings of his fancy, and did not allow it to be subjugated to his fluctuating moods, but held the mental balance even.

Schiller's fancy was not excited by spontaneous moods. It was not in that way that he was urged to artistic expression. His moods depended upon his ideas. They were produced by ideas and modified by ideas. Schiller's fancy no doubt lent poetic ideas to his searching intellect; but it did not work on its own account as Goethe's did. It was an effect of the will. Schiller could never say that his works arose "as in a dream," or that he versified "like a sleepwalker." He did not feel that he produced "unconsciously." What he did was the result of the most deliberate purpose.

Goethe's impulse to deliver himself, to set forth his sentiments in artistic form, corresponds to Schiller's need of producing, to the exuberance "impelled by superfluity"

* Freudvoll und leidvoll
Gedankenvoll sein;
Hangen und Bangen
In schwebender Pein,
Himmelhoch jauchzend,
Zum Tode betrübt . . .

toward artistic creation. The turning-point for him lies in the intellect, and this draws from the outward world and from fancy in order to erect a sublime art temple. The characters produced by him did not, like Goethe's, arise from his own sentiment, but were thoroughly artificial products.

Both Goethe and Schiller felt the gulf between them. After their first meeting, Schiller wrote to Körner: "His whole nature is laid down on other lines from mine; he lives in another world, and our modes of thought seem to be widely remote."

Knowing that Goethe had in many ways excelled him, Schiller wrote: "It is true that, in entering this path, I encroach upon Goethe's domain and must measure myself against him. It is furthermore certain that here I will be outstripped by him. But a remainder is left for me, which is mine, and which he can never attain; so that the preference given to him will be no shame to me, and I hope that things will about balance. In my most courageous moments I hope that the public will class us as different, but will not subordinate one species to the other, rather co-ordinating us both under a broader idealistic generic concept." Thus Schiller justly recognised the difference of their "species" and had the right feeling that the one species ought not to be subordinated to the other. Twenty years after Schiller's death Goethe said: "Schiller, who had the true poetical nature, but whose mind inclined to reflection and compelled much by force of reflection, that ought to spring up in a poet unconsciously and of its own accord, drew many young men his way who could, after all, only learn his language."

The vast difference between these two men showed itself in many traits of their character. Goethe, who in his poems responded only to an inward impulse, a natural need, wrote above all for himself, and asked nothing for the public. Schiller's efforts were to impose upon the world, to please

the public. He himself says: "The public is now all with me; it is the subject of my studies, it is my sovereign, my friend. To the public alone I now belong. I shall submit to no other tribunal than this. This I fear, and this I respect." Goethe neither feared nor honoured the public, and did not concern himself about what critics said of him, while Schiller often confessed that the critics had influenced him much. Goethe made no haste to get his works before the public; while Schiller could not wait till his creation was mature to commence publication. Thus, he published fragments of "Don Carlos" in Thalia, long before the poem was completed. But he himself regretted it later, for he would have liked to have altered something.

As I said above, Shakespeare might be called a Schiller raised to a higher power. Unfortunately, we have no detailed information about his life and opinions. But his works sufficiently show that never has poet been able to paint characters so true to nature and life as he. The world in its unadulterated genuineness and merest truth was reflected in the soul of this immortal poet. No theatrical puppets are they to whom his fancy gave being. They are men and women—living flesh and blood. They really feel, lament and make merry. But the poet himself does not speak to us through them. The man Shakespeare we do not know, nor can we guess what manner of man he was, nor what he felt. In every word of Goethe it is him we hear, and it is inconceivable that anybody should love his works without seeing the poet in them, who speaks to us by them. But with Shakespeare it is only for his characters that we warm up. With them we can sympathize, but the poet remains a stranger to us.

Schiller himself tells us that the matter of his poems often left him cold. His feelings were not engaged. In the whole of Wallenstein only two persons interested him (probably Max and Thekla). With many poets we can see that their

heroic characters, which mounted their fancy, exercised a powerful influence upon their poetic hearts. So Dickens tells us that he sympathized with his favourite heroes; that he decidedly looked upon them as living persons; that during the composition he concerned himself about their fate as he would about a dear friend's; that, in short, he partook of their sorrows and joys in his inmost soul. Thus, while with Goethe moods and sentiments were at the bottom of the production of the work of art, such psychical conditions were called forth in Dickens in a secondary way by the productions of his fancy. With Schiller, again, moods seem to have played neither an active nor a passive part in the creation of his poems. A poet who, from a psychological point of view, is to be compared with Goethe—though in a much lower potency, for whom, however, art was equally a means for expressing his feelings and sentiments—is Byron, on which account Goethe rated him particularly high, feeling in him a certain mental affinity to himself.

We see, then, how enormous a difference, from a psychological point of view, there is between the greatest poets, especially between those two whom the German people are accustomed to couple together as inseparable. Nor do these differences consist in one's being placed above the other; but those psychical phenomena which for Goethe formed the main condition of his poetic life are not present at all in Schiller, but are replaced by different qualities. Yet there is one element they have in common. I mean creative fancy, without which it is impossible to conceive of a poet. This creative fancy therefore forms a common factor of all poetical genius.

Let us now turn to a psychological study of the most famous composers. We frequently meet with descriptions of the mode of production of their works, as we do with those of poets of genius. They, too, have the feeling of unconscious production, of the independent springing up of

their tone-poems. Mozart frequently said the ideas of his creations came to him as in a dream. Gluck said thoughts flowed to him, and he knew not whence they came. Haydn believed that a "divine will" had through him created his greatest work—Die Schöpfung.

Here again, then, we find an independent fancy, such as we have recognised in poets of genius. In quite an analogous way in painters of genius fancy sometimes pours out its wealth in an inexhaustible spring. The imagination bodies forth new shapes unceasingly, and every figure, every tree, every stream is set forth in its smallest details; and these ideas weld with others in harmonious ideal images.

The question which presents itself, then, is: Whence comes it that one fancy expresses itself in poetic production, that in another musical creations spring up, while in a third painting is the vent of the creative imagination? The answer to this question leads us to consider that congenital capacity which is generally called Talent.

What is, for example, musical talent? While at the first hearing of a concerted piece unmusical persons hear nothing but the flow of the melody and the general character of the sounds, those who are talented comprehend the composition in all its divisions. In their apperception the harmony resolves itself into its parts, and the general effect of the sound is analyzed. While the sensuous impression called forth by music quickly passes away in those without talent, with talent a single hearing suffices to create a lasting memory. Musical talent is able to make out subtleties which are quite hidden from those who want it. In musicians of talent not even the direct excitation of musical reminiscences is needed to suggest auditory images, but they may be produced associatively from optical centres of apperception. Such people can, for example, read over a score and acquire as clear an idea of the composition as if they actually heard it. Though these qualities be carried to their highest pitch, they still

remain matters not of genius but of talent. Mozart after hearing a mass once was able to write the whole down; but this is only a proof of vast talent, and does not depend upon that creative fancy which his compositions bespeak.

We have reason to presume that the causes of talent are to be attributed to anatomical conditions. For example, the autopsy of the brain of Gambetta (whose extraordinary oratorical power is well known) showed an uncommonly great development of the third frontal or Broca's convolution—that is to say, of the part of the brain in which the centre of language is situated. It is to be presumed that musical talent depends upon a specially refined development of a certain acoustic centre, although its exact localization at present escapes our knowledge. Talent is certainly nothing but the material for artistic creation. It is, so to say, the instrument of the artist, while the creative power of genius corresponds to the artistic power of drawing tones from that instrument.

In Mozart the turning point of his artistic production lay in his inexhaustible fancy, which, according to his family, was in incessant action. His wife said: "In truth, his head was working all the time, his mind was ever moving, he composed almost unceasingly." "In Prague it once happened that Mozart, while he was playing billiards, was humming a *motif*, and from time to time would look into a book he had with him. Afterward he confessed that he had been at work upon the first quintette of the Zauberflöte."* His sister Sophia described him as follows: "He was always in good humour, but even at best very reflective, looking one very sharp in the eye meantime, answering attentively whether he was cheerful or sad, yet always seeming to be preoccupied with something else. Even while washing his hands in the morning he would walk up and down the room;

* Otto Jahn, Mozart, i, 840.

and he never stood still, but would strike one heel against the other. And he was always reflecting."* "When he travelled with his wife through a beautiful country he looked attentively and silently upon the world about him. His physiognomy, commonly rather self-contained and gloomy than brisk and free, would gradually become more cheerful, and then he would begin to sing, or rather to hum, until at last he would exclaim, 'If I only had that theme on paper!' And if she said that it could easily be done, he would say, 'Yes, of course, it is a stupid thing that we must sit down and do our work in the room.'" This remark reminds us of a passage in a letter of Goethe: "As you may readily imagine, I have a hundred new things in my head; and now it does not depend on thinking; it depends on the making. What a thing it would be if we could confine objects so that they would stay put!"

In his inexhaustible and restlessly working fancy Mozart was very much like Goethe. His works commonly lay ready-made in his memory when he began to set them down on paper. He wrote most unwillingly, and generally waited till the last minute, so that he was commonly behind time. It is well known that he wrote the overture to Don Juan the night before the performance of the opera. While we consider creative fancy to be a part of the action of his genius, his vast musical memory was a matter of talent, which in Mozart was not less phenomenal. When he once sent his sister a fugue with a prelude he excused himself for writing the prelude after the fugue. "The truth is," said he, "it was while I was writing down the fugue that I composed the prelude."† Thus his fancy was able to work undisturbed while he exercised his intellectual reproductive power. This fact may at first sight seem incredible and contradictory to common psychical conditions. But it is not

* Nissen, Mozart, p. 627.

† Jahn, *Op. cit.*, ii, 127.

so. Here again is a high refinement of a universal psychical phenomenon. Most men, while engaged in a mechanical occupation, can give a free rein to the play of fancy; and even when the mechanical work requires some attention, many men are able at the same time to think about something else. Whoever is accustomed to work in a laboratory knows very well what it is to follow those mechanical operations with attention and at the same time to be considering some important question. The strange thing in Mozart's case is that the writing down from memory of a fugue—a work which would have required the concentrated attention of a fairly talented man—was for him a mere mechanical act. We hardly know which most to admire, his stupendous talent or his creative genius.

Mozart's rich fancy, like that of Goethe, was directed by a high intellectual faculty which checked its boilings over, held the ideas to an ordered sequence, and eliminated disturbing elements. Mozart's capacity of concentrating his attention upon what was in his mind, and of shutting out all disturbing perceptions of sense, was tremendous. While he was at work social conversation about him was no annoyance, and even with an orchestra playing in his ears he could calmly follow out his own fancy. "His eldest sister, Frau Hofer, told Neukomm that even at the opera,—as anybody who knew him could easily observe by the restless movements of his hands, by his glance, and by his pursing his lips to sing or whistle,—he would be completely taken up in following out his inward train of music." *

But wherever it was worth while to pay attention to the outer world, and to take in outward impressions of sense, he had an equally high capacity for that. His fancy received rich aliment from the action of his intellect. He had studied the old masters perfectly. He himself said: "Nobody takes

* Jahn, vol. ii, p. 129.

so much pains in the study of composition as I. You could not easily name a famous master in music whom I have not industriously studied, often going through his works several times." Rochlitz reports that he knew the chief works of Händel as well as if he had all his life been director of the London Academy for the Support of Old Music.

With all the likeness between Mozart and Goethe there was this remarkable difference between them, that Mozart was not influenced by moods. They had no part whatever in the work of his artistic production. Art was not for him the means of expression of his own sentiments, as it was with Goethe; he could adapt the play of his fancy to outward conditions, to motives of the outer world; so that, in this respect, Mozart strongly reminds one of Schiller. He could set his fancy any problem he liked, and it would promptly proceed to solve it. Mozart could compose to order; and many of his works, especially canons, were produced in that way. In consonance with this was Mozart's power of setting foreign texts of operas to music, which corresponded precisely to the character and mood of the words, although he did not warm up to them.

In Beethoven, on the contrary, art was solely a means of expression of his own sentiments and feelings. The immortal creations which sprang from his artistic fancy enable us to look deeply into the spiritual life of the great artist. They paint his inner struggles, his anguish, and his delight.

The ideal that was constantly before him, and which by great struggles he sought to attain, was that of a strong, active, manly character, unmoved by any blow of fate and never despondent in the struggle of life, but keeping up its courage to its last breath. "Courage! However weak my body, my soul shall rule." To this boast he always adhered, no matter how hard his lot. After a joyless youth he had to contend with the direst need. But worst of all was the defect of his hearing, which at last amounted to stone-deafness.

One can imagine what it meant for him to be the only one to whom it was not permitted to listen to his own symphonies. But dreadful as it was, his courage was never broken; his soul marched victoriously to the strife and held command over his sufferings.

Such moods as struggle, gloom, hope, pleasure, suffering, burst into expression in his art of music—the mother tongue of sentiments and moods. Of every creation of Beethoven we may say, with Goethe, it was "a fragment of one long confession."

The fineness of Beethoven's faculty of sense, the subtilty in the *nuances* of his moods, was a no less important factor of his nature than his rich creative fancy. Words could not describe his sentiments; only music, the language of the heart, could render them; and his moods were the motives of the action of his genius.

How little such feelings and sentiments can be described in words is shown by Richard Wagner in his Programmatische Erläuterungen.* In speaking of the Heroic Symphony he says: "The first movement brings to a focus all the sentiments of a rich manly nature in restless, youthful, active emotion. Bliss and woe, delight and suffering, joy and grief, musing and aspiration, yearning and revelling, daring, insolence, and indomitable self-feeling jostle so closely upon one another that while we sympathize with all these sentiments, we can isolate no one, but are obliged to partake of all as this master of all sentiments delivers them." Of the second movement he says: "A sentiment excited in solemn nuptials and combined with profound pain is communicated to us in a tone language which takes possession of us; an earnest, manly sorrow looks forward out of its plaint to soft pathos, to recollections, to tears of love, to inward elevation, to inspired summons." But it is in vain that Wagner

* Gesammelte Schriften, vol. v.

strives to reproduce in words the mood produced by the work or the sentiments of his artistic heart. He confesses it himself: "But who could paint in words the infinitely manifold but inexpressible sentiments which pass from pain to the highest exultation, and from exultation to the softest grief, until they come to rest in a bottomless pondering? The tone poet alone could do this in this wonderful composition." The account closes with the words: "But only in the master's tone-speech could that unspeakable meaning be uttered which my confined words have attempted to describe with the greatest modesty."

Thus between these two classics, Mozart and Beethoven, there was a distinction analogous to that between Schiller and Goethe. Still, creative fancy is the common and indispensable factor, without which neither a poet nor a composer of genius can be conceived.

It plays the same important part in the minds of painters. Accordingly, Humboldt* says: "As soon as the painter's fancy has given birth to the living image, the masterpiece is completed, though his hand were that instant to be paralyzed. The actual execution is but the echo of that decisive moment." But the same psychological distinction pursues us. For some painters art was merely the means of expression of their sentiments and moods. Examples will be mentioned in another chapter.

Let us first turn our attention to representatives of the arts of execution. I mean musical performers and actors.

We have already analyzed the nature of musical talent, so that we can come at once to the question, What is the distinction between a performer of talent and a performer of genius?

Jean Paul† speaks of men of "receptive or passive genius" "who are richer in receptive than in creative fancy,"

* Schiller's Horen, Bd. I.

† Jean Paul, Vorschule der Æsthetik.

to whose productions that radiance of genius is wanting "which only breaks forth from the consensus of all the powers, and from great powers alone."

By "receptive fancy," which is an expression psychologically incorrect, Jean Paul means that state of heart which is particularly inclined to be put by a work of art into a responsive mood, a disposition that can enter into the sentiments of the artist and can fully enjoy his work. Jean Paul says: "There are men who, endowed with a higher sensibility than powerful talent in itself confers, but with less power, receive into a consecrated, open soul the great world-mind, be it in outward life or in poems and thoughts, and remain constant to it as the tender woman to the strong man, disdaining the vulgar, and who yet, if they would express their love, stammer out broken, confused words and say something different from what they wished to say." These are people endowed with extreme delicacy of feeling and sentiment, so that they are more capable of being absorbed in a work of genius than others, yet lacking the creative fancy which would enable them to give to their sensations an independent artistic expression. Let such people be provided with musical talent which specially fits them for the use of an instrument, and they will have the opportunity, in playing the compositions of others, to express their own artistic feelings and sentiments. They will put their souls into the reproduction of the work. In short, they will be performers of genius. Schütz * says of Paganini: "The instant he took his instrument a divine spark seemed to touch him, and celestial fire ran through his being. Every feeling of weakness departed. He was transformed into a new being; he instantly became another soul; and so long as he played, his strength was more than quintupled." So it is with those actors and singers who in the performance of a

* Leben, Charakter, und Kunst des Ritters Nicolo Paganini.

part are completely absorbed in the situation. They throw into it their artistically excited hearts, and fulfil their feelings and sentiments.

Other performers of no less talent, or perhaps more, remain cold and without sensation in the performance of the work of art. With them the intellectual function alone determines their rendering of the piece. The effects are calculated, the execution studied, the whole is made up. However great the talent of such performers, bringing them to the highest pitch of technical skill, genius will never be attributed to them by the great public. Thus we see that in artists of execution the psychical causes of performances of genius have to be sought in the sphere of feeling and sensation. That faculty which we have recognised as the chief requisite for the genius of the creative artist—namely, creative fancy—is never present in the performer of genius.

Thus, in the attempt to reduce genius in different departments to the same or similar faculties, we are thrown into perplexity. There are doubtless common factors, but it must be admitted that the psychical elements which constitute the essence of genius in poets such as Schiller, and in performers such as Paganini, have nothing in common.

We now pass to the consideration of those famous men who are called men of scientific genius or scholars of genius. An inquiry into the causes of scientific genius will show that it has two factors—discovery and invention. Copernicus, Galileo, Newton distinguished themselves by many important discoveries. As we have seen above, the success of the discoverer is partly dependent upon external circumstances; so that we shall not remain content with the outward facts, but shall endeavour to probe the matter to the bottom. In short, we shall try to find psychical circumstances accounting for the discoveries of genius.

When Newton's friend Halley once asked him how he

over came to make all those great discoveries, he said it was by incessantly dwelling on the problems concerned. On another occasion he said that the chief difference between him and other men was that he had more patience than others.

Galileo investigated and worked restlessly to his latest years. When he was blind in both eyes, he wrote, by the hand of another, that in his darkness his mind was perpetually turning over the problems of nature, and would not cease its activity, even when he desired rest; so that he was deprived of his sleep.

These and other sayings of famous men of science about the actions of their mind and the origin of the ideas of genius have an entirely different tone from the analogous reports of poets and composers. Great discoveries, unless they were mere effects of chance, have never been made "unconsciously," "as in a dream," "like sleepwalking," but, on the contrary, require the completest wakefulness, self-conscious thought, and untiring industry. These characters, which we find in all great investigators and scholars, depend upon the extremest refinement of that part of the psychical organ which is the vehicle of the intellectual powers. In the first place, and above all, great discoverers have great powers of observation. For this, as we know, undivided attention concentrated upon an exterior process is requisite. The faculties of perception and ideation are highly refined; the organs of apperception and reproduction act with the greatest energy. The ideas obtained in this way are connected into conceptual forms by that intellectual action which Wundt * terms the "inductive understanding." Upon the extremest refinement of this faculty depends the quick and correct recognition of the connections of things which is met with in great investigators.

We find here, then, essentially different psychical con-

* Wundt. Physiologische Psychologie, ii, 403.

ditions from those of poets and artists of genius. We may go so far as to say that they are antagonistic, the one to the other. A rich fancy and a variety of moods, feelings, and sentiments, which form the main condition of a productive artist, are not only of no use to a great investigator of Nature, but they are positively disadvantageous to him. Every human being possesses fancy, and an absolutely sharp line of demarcation cannot be drawn between fancy and intellect. Every man, too, is subject to oscillations of his moods. But to the great investigator it is absolutely essential that his intellect should possess an iron rule over all other psychical factors. Schiller says of the poet: "He will do well not to let his reason keep too severe a guard at the doors against the incrowding ideas." But for the investigating scholar it is not well that a rich fancy should modify the result of his objective observations or should draw his attention away from the object of his research.

Those authors who endeavour to find a general psychological basis for genius, but strive to limit the term to a particular class of famous men—as, for example, to productive artists—cannot avoid the incorrect reasoning into which Meyer falls when he says*: "Nobody can dispute that genius, even in science, is only the result of the creative force of imagination." In another place the same author says: "Reflective thought is often prejudicial to the creative power of genius. Thought must come from itself and conclude according to its elective affinities." According to this, all reflective thought must be prejudicial to the genius of the scholar. But we have learned from their own words that reflection is requisite to the success of scholars.

Whoever, like Meyer, recognises "creative imagination" and the "unconscious origination of thoughts" as the essence of genius ought not to apply that term to the learned. But

* Jürgen Bona Meyer. Genie und Talent.

when Schopenhauer, who gave a similar meaning to genius, says of generals and statesmen, "It is ridiculous to talk of genius in such folks," Herr Meyer protests and says: "I should rather call it ridiculous to deny that Frederick the Great was a political and military genius, that Napoleon was a general of genius, or that Bismarck was a statesman of genius."

The usage of language alone, irrespective of other considerations, must determine whether we shall apply the name of genius to generals or statesmen; but this much is manifest, that the greatness of a military commander depends upon essentially different psychical conditions from the greatness of an artist. If we are to conceive of genius as Meyer does, and are to follow him in declaring that the "how" and the "wherefore" "remain obscure" for genius, that "nothing is less conscious," "nothing less voluntary," than "a thought of genius," and that "reflecting thought is sometimes prejudicial to the creative force of genius," then it certainly must seem ridiculous to connect such an appellation with Frederick the Great, Napoleon, or Bismarck. Imagine a great statesman for whom the "how" and the "wherefore" remain always obscure. Think of a Bismarck devoid of "reflective thought."

The greatness of a general or a statesman is exclusively due to sharpness of intellect. A power of swift apprehension, an instantaneous recognition of facts and their connections, a logical and consecutive reason—these are the qualities which are indispensable to a general of genius. The great statesman and the great soldier must neither of them be influenced by varying moods and feelings. All moods and feelings must be entirely subordinated. An understanding conscious of its purpose and an iron will must direct and lead the whole action of the soul. The general of genius is always distinguished by discretion and cold deliberation; he preserves an imposing calm. At critical mo-

ments he shows a wonderful presence of mind. He never permits any upwellings of feeling or preponderance of emotion. Hence the greatest statesman of our age has received the admirable epithet of the Man of Iron. How utterly is the psychical constitution of such a man unlike the rich and sensitive heart of the artist of genius! For the substance of the great statesman of genius iron is required; but it is wax that has to compose the sensitive artist.

The psychical faculties are not sharply separable. They insensibly shade into one another. Hence we find a gradual transitional series of minds bridging over the interval between creative art and inductive science. It is in this series that we are to place the inventor. For him a combination of fancy with "inductive intellectual action," as Wundt calls it, is what is to be desired. The action of his productive imagination is essentially different from that of the free, creative fancy of the artist of genius. In the dreams of the artist the work of art emerges freely, without that definite, prefigured, foreseen purpose which is needed in the imagination of the inventor. Well-planned, systematic thought is for him not less requisite than the productive faculty. It is the combination of both states, or an intermediate condition, which we find here.

There are many points of agreement between the psychical conditions of the creative artist and those of the scientific investigator. But where art begins science ends. Speculative philosophy used to call for creative imagination, no doubt; but this department of thought, which among the ancients was the queen of the sciences, is to-day scarcely recognised as science at all. Plato was much more a poet than a representative of science. On the other hand, those poets and novelists who undertake the construction of characters in objective fashion, on a basis of research and observation, approximate toward scientific minds.

Perhaps when Meyer says that genius in science is ful-

filled only by the creative force of imagination he means the speculative sciences of theology and philosophy. But the further science advances toward its goal of truth, the more it will emancipate itself from fancies; or, to express the matter more accurately, the less science has to do with fancy, the more truthful will it become and the higher will be its value. In the truest of all the sciences, mathematics, fancy will accomplish very little. Fancy can not solve equations nor enunciate theorems. Fancy never discovered bacteria, nor has it been successful as a method of medical diagnosis.

We conclude, then, that *genius in different departments is referable to the most diverse psychical conditions.* Psychical faculties and characters which in one case constitute the essence of genius, in another case are inconsistent with the action of genius. In short, definite psychical characters common to all genius are not to be found. One would seek in vain any common psychological explanation of the greatness of a Paganini and a Bismarck, of a Mozart and a Napoleon.

That which of old connected all genius in the eyes of men and, in fact, gave rise to the conception, was the idea of the mystical, the unaccountable, the supernatural. If any such standpoint as that is to be assumed, of course there remains no difficulty in finding an unequivocal meaning for the term. Prof. Jürgen Bona Meyer says: "The ancient Greeks considered poets and artists to be consecrated to God and inspired of God. When they produced their works the Godhead seized upon them in sacred madness, and through them spoke to men. Who knows but that is the very truth? Perhaps God really does lead the world by these creative souls to the high goal to which it is destined. Perhaps a philosophy of history might make this significance of the heroes of spirit and of force manifest, and vindicate the faith which, in the geniuses of earth, will recognise the immediate agents of God." If notions like these are what

is meant by ideas of genius, Meyer is quite right in saying that genius can be introduced into science only by the creative force of the imagination. Modern science, however, can not follow Mr. Meyer in these "fancies of genius," for it is restricted to objective observation and to actual knowledge.

The foregoing researches will bring the reader to the conviction that *no psychological meaning can be attached to the word genius.* We can make out what a poetic genius is, what a composer of genius is, what a performer of genius is, what a military genius is, what a scientific genius is, etc.; but to accept genius as a univocal term and attach one psychological definition to it, to any good purpose, is not to be done. Undoubtedly all men of genius have common traits; but they are not traits characteristic of genius; they are such as are possessed by other men, and more or less by all men. Indeed, in no case is there anything in the mode of action of genius qualitatively different from that of other men; there are only different degrees of the same qualities. We can, for any psychical character, form an unbroken series of instances from the grade met with in the average man up to phenomenal genius, and every rung of the ladder will be occupied; so that it is impossible to say where the line is to be drawn between ordinary men and men of genius. In psychology every individual man is a *species sui generis.* To attempt to separate men into disparate kinds, as we do plants, would be a backward step in biology.

Chemists analyze different kinds of substances, and show that all contain precisely the same elements; so that no two substances differ, except in the proportions of their elementary constituents. It is just as scientifically established that in all men precisely the same psychical elements occur, and that these may exist in any one proportion as well as in any other. Mood, fancy, intellectual function, memory, ideation, apprehension, etc., are characters present in every

man, and into them psychological analysis dissects every man's faculties, whether he be a genius or whether he be an ordinary man.

The purpose of these researches and of the conclusions to which they lead will become apparent in the following chapter. Psychiatrists have of late been much interested in genius; but before I could discuss the questions which have been mooted, it seemed incumbent upon me to ascertain what is meant by genius. Was it a psychologically definite condition, or was it a loose name for a promiscuous bundle of phenomena? Having, in what precedes, expressed my opinion upon this, I now proceed to the principal question.

GENIUS AND INSANITY.

HAVING come to the conclusion that the designation "genius" does not express any one psychological concept, that nobody has succeeded in giving a pregnant definition of genius, nor is likely to do so, and also that insanity is equally indefinable, that it is impossible to draw a sharp line between mental sanity and mental derangement, it may seem useless to attempt to compare two such indefinite quantities. Still, the comparison—so long as it is a comparison—if we draw our conclusions with circumspection, can hardly do any harm; and it may possibly enrich our knowledge and lead us toward a recognition of truth.

It is no new-fangled notion that genius and insanity are somehow connected. Plato is known to have spoken of a *θεία μανία*, a divine insanity of poets. Seneca* attributes to Aristotle the saying, "Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiæ fuit." Aristotle† says: "Those who have been eminent in philosophy, politics, poetry, and the arts have all had tendencies toward melancholia." Cicero says:‡ "Negat enim sine furore Democritus quemquam poetam magnum esse posse, quod idem dicit Plato." Horace* speaks of an *amabilis insania*, and Wieland of an amiable insanity of the Muses. Dryden‖ has the lines—

> Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

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* De tranquilitate animi.
† Problemata, 30, 1.
‡ De divinatione, i, 37.
* Od. iii, 4.
‖ Absalom and Architophel, i, 63.

One undeniable resemblance of the two phenomena is the relative infrequency of their occurrence and their divergence from the majority of mankind. Of old there was a tendency to ascribe everything that was uncommon and unaccountable to the influence of a supernatural force. Accordingly, it was believed that famous minds, as well as those that were darkened with madness, stood under a direct divine influence, or even formed, themselves, a part of the Godhead. In the Middle Ages the crazy were held to be bewitched, or possessed of the devil, while the greatest minds were honoured as graced by the Holy Spirit. Not infrequently the crazy, too, if their delusions or hallucinations were of a religious cast, were considered as saints in direct communion with the Deity. At the same time, eminent men of science, persecuted by ignorance and superstition, were abhorred as tools of the devil or burnt as heretics. At all events, genius and insanity—two inexplicable phenomena and vaguely defined—have been confounded together in various ages of the world, according to the ideas of those times.

After modern science had got rid of the dross of superstition and had taken its stand upon sceptical and objective observation, a revolution of opinion took place. Anciently an unbounded freedom had been attributed to the play of Nature. This far surpassed those limits within which rigid laws of Nature allow any such play. That was supernatural. But in modern times the tendency has been to confine the action of Nature within much too restricted bounds. All phenomena must now be brought under a *schema* artificially erected. Everything must have just such a measure and just such a weight, and every action of Nature is regarded as subject to a numerical rule. This method of investigation may have had beneficial results in physics, chemistry, and the other sciences that have flourished under it, but such a method of violent formularization must prove out of place

for a science like psychology, in which we must always be limited to purely empirical facts, so that our investigations can only be analytical, and can never proceed synthetically.

As I have repeatedly remarked, psychology must strictly individualize; and I can imagine nothing more preposterous or unscientific than to assume a so-called normal man, and to conclude that anything which widely departs from that norm is diseased. We have seen that all phenomena of pronounced mental disease arise from the same psychical elements as the healthy action of the mind. We have further seen that the mental life of those great men whom we call geniuses presents no other psychical conditions than those of ordinary men, except for differences of quantity. "Health and disease," says Claude Bernard, "are not two essentially different forms, as the old physicians could believe, and as many practitioners still believe. They are not to be regarded as distinct principles, as entities disputing for the living organism, and making it the theatre of their war. That sort of ideas belongs in the medical lumber room. But, in fact, between any form of disease and health there are only differences of degree. No disease is anything more than an exaggeration, or disproportion, or anharmony of normal phenomena." * This is true of all diseases whatsoever, whether they be of corporeal or of mental origin. Hence the decision whether anything is to be considered as a disease or not cannot be made to depend upon how far the phenomena depart from a norm. The only question is, whether the vital action of the organism is prejudiced or the performance of the individual deranged. Take, for example, bodily deformities or other perturbations of development. The only question is whether the individual concerned is disabled or not. A woman with a contracted pelvis, if she be otherwise normal and her organs act nor-

* Leçons sur la chaleur animale. Paris, 1875, Leçon 19me.

mally, will not be called diseased; but as soon as she becomes pregnant she becomes a pathological subject, because parturition can not take place in the normal way. A man whose lungs are ill developed, so that the slightest exertion produces dyspnœa, must be considered as ill, while another man with uncommonly large lungs, such as fast runners generally have, is certainly not to be called diseased on account of this abnormality.

People with bodily deformities, or anomalies of development, frequently find themselves in situations in which they cannot fulfil some requirements of business; and it depends upon the degree of their incapacity how far their anomalies are to be reckoned as pathological. The laity are frequently able to decide what can be expected of such people, and what not. The subjects can often estimate for themselves what they can undertake. Nobody would accept a dwarf for military service, and a weak man will be conscious that he is not fit to be a drawer of stones.

It is the same in regard to mental departures from the average proportions. Only, people with mental deformities are commonly less able than those misshapen in body to decide for themselves in regard to their capabilities, being generally not at all aware of their defects. Nor are the laity in condition to form a sound judgment of the mental state of such people. It is therefore for the best interests of these subjects, as well as for society, that the question of their accountability and responsibility should be left to experts.

Now, how is it with corporeally overdeveloped men, or giants? According to the investigations of Lange, Bollinger, Ecker, and Ranke, a number of those giants who have been exactly described are disproportioned. "In some cases there is a surprising disproportion between the relatively small development of the central nervous system and their overgrown bodies. Most commonly their excessively

developed bones are pathologically brittle, with irregular partial thickenings, curvatures, or absolute deformities." * Nevertheless, cases do occur, according to Ranke, in which these men are well proportioned and can fulfil the requirements of life. The question whether giants, or overgrown men, are to be regarded as diseased depends entirely upon the proportionate development of their parts. Gigantic growth *per se* is surely not morbid. But if it is carried out in some parts of the body at the expense of the development of other parts, be it with reference to the structure of the tissues or to the general growth, we have a deformity which consists in an anomaly of development analogous to a congenital crippling or dwarfish growth.

There is no reason for regarding mental giants from a different point of view. In order to judge of them, we have to inquire whether their development is proportional, or whether there is an overdevelopment of one part of the psychical organ at the expense of other parts, so as to disturb their inward equilibrium and give rise to a morbid state. No doubt, if we are to assume that whatever does not conform to the norm is to be considered as diseased, every man mentally famous must be set down, without further parley, as a pathological subject. This opinion has found many advocates, who maintain that careful research signally confirms their theory, and that most, if not all, famous men exhibit symptoms of mental disease.

The first writer to discuss the subject at length was Moreau de Tours,† who considers genius as a positive disease of the mind, consequent upon an overexcitation of the brain. "Genius," he says, "like every other intellectual condition of dynamism, necessarily has its material substratum. This substratum is a semi-morbid state of the brain, a

* Ranke. Der Mensch.

† La psychologie morbide dans ses rapports avec la philosophie de l'histoire, Paris, 1859.

true nervous erethism (orgasm or excited state), the source of which is from this moment well known. . . .

"Whenever the psychic forces surpass the ordinary limits of their action, whether we consider them in their most elevated manifestations—those in appearance the most independent of the organization—or in their simplest and most rudimentary expression, whether in the most transcendent operations of the intellect, or in the unelaborated and almost material fact of sensation—the cause must be sought in certain neuropathic conditions of the subjects."

No attempt is made by Moreau to define genius or to attach a psychological meaning to the term. In his examples he treats all men as geniuses who have accomplished anything famous in any department, without regard to their psychical divergencies. He might therefore just as well have stated his proposition in these terms: All men who have ever accomplished anything very remarkable were insane. This seems to be a fair statement of his real position.

This opinion was supposed to have been completely confirmed by the discovery of the many "morbid symptoms" which men of genius present. Moreau collected a very considerable number of such cases, which have been injudiciously accepted by the other authors who have elaborated the same theme, and have received great accessions from new discoveries. One of the most comprehensive works in this department is that of Lombroso, whose book * has created a general sensation. Extensive as it is, its author makes no attempt to define genius, but seems to regard the meaning of the word as well settled. In the chapter entitled The Physiology of Genius, in which we might expect to find the writer's opinion upon this point set forth, he tells us that men of genius commonly have cold feet and warm heads, etc., but unfortunately omits to inform us what he means by

a man of genius. Throughout the book all sorts of men who have ever attained any sort of eminence are adduced as examples of men of genius. Such characters as Columbus and Donizetti are treated promiscuously. The greatest men in the history of art and science are placed cheek by jowl with any weak-minded persons whose names have by some accident come before the public. Lombroso's conclusion is that "between the physiology of the man of genius and the pathology of the insane there are not a few points of agreement." At the same time, in the book of which we are speaking, he says that there have been men of genius who, "allowance being made for some eccentricities of sense," have never become insane. His list of these "sane geniuses" is "Spinoza, Columbus, Dante, Michel Angelo," etc.—a wonderfully harmonious assemblage. But subsequent studies have led this distinguished writer to modify this last opinion, and he has since declared that "cases of genuine men of genius in which anomalies are wanting are probably illusory. In such cases either anomalies have escaped notice or defective data prevent our knowing of them." * What a pity that we neither know what he means by "genuine men of genius" nor by "anomalies"!

Before we go on to examine the numerous "morbid symptoms of genius" which Moreau and Lombroso are supposed to have discovered, let us briefly call to mind in what way we have come to specify certain phenomena as symptoms of mental derangement.

Psychiatry is, more than others, an empirical science. Whatever we know about it we have learned by experience and observation. As I have repeatedly insisted, neither in somatic nor in psychical medicine are there any sharp boundaries between health and disease. In reference to the

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* Die Zukunft, herausgeb. Maxim[illegible]

body, "feeling well" is the chief mark of health. Everybody who is sick knows it. Connected with the majority of diseases there are positive pains, in consequence of which those who are taken ill send for the doctor. Pain has rightly been called the sentinel of health; but with the mind it is otherwise. Here there is no such connection between health and feeling well. The illness gives no pain, at least not directly; and the patient is in very little condition to say whether he is well or not. On the contrary, the consciousness of being deranged is recognised as the most marked symptom of convalescence. The question has here to be decided in quite other ways. Disease is not an entity, and no precise definition can be given of it. The chief point upon which the decision must turn is the person's ability to do his duties to society.

We have learned by experience that there are certain typically recurring forms of a psychical process in which a disorder of self-consciousness has taken place, so that the persons affected were deprived of their self-control. We have become acquainted with well-marked cases in which a general decay of the mental powers commenced; and this has gone on until the capacity of the patients for business has sunk to nothing, etc. In this purely experimental way we have come to recognise classes of mental diseases which are marked by certain phenomena and by a certain course.

The next step in the progress of science was the comparison of the psychological conditions of those who were undoubtedly insane with mentally sane men. Here we had a right to the premises that on the one side we had minds mentally sound, and on the other minds mentally deranged. Having studied the psychological distinctions between the two, psychiatrists came to recognise the so-called symptoms of insanity.

It is important to remark that, although the aggregate of the symptoms constitutes the disease, yet it was not the

symptoms which primarily presented themselves to our recognition. On the contrary, we first attained it by the study of the single elements of the diseases. For example, in early times hallucinations were explained in all sorts of mystical ways, as seeing ghosts, divine visions, suggestions of the devil, etc.; but by the study of mental diseases psychiatrists came to recognise that in such cases hallucinations are extraordinarily frequent. They thus become accustomed to consider the occurrence of hallucinations as in every case a morbid symptom. In fact, it became apparent that wherever there were illusions of the senses, as a rule, a mental disorder could be made out.

By a further study of the symptoms and of the course of mental diseases, psychiatrists ultimately became able to diagnose mental derangements at a time at which ordinary people would have been able to perceive little or no alteration of the mental processes of the patients. All this rests solely on experience. Only through experience has it come to pass that we can now, on recognising a certain set of symptoms, predict a certain course of the psychical process.

Should our experiences in the department of psychiatry receive an augmentation, we shall have every reason to be thankful; for, in spite of all our efforts, we stand upon the threshold of the science. But every new experience brings new difficulties with it, for it is from experience that we have to draw our conclusions. Now, new experiences often wreck our finest theories, in one or other of two ways—namely, first, by not confirming them, or, secondly, by conflicting with them. That is the way with unprejudiced tests and objective judgments.

Accordingly, after a great number of mental maladies, such as paranoia, progressive paralysis, certain forms of melancholia, mania, etc., had been found to be accompanied by hallucinations as an important symptom, the discovery was made that a great number of famous men—the so-called

men of genius—were equally subject to deceptions of the senses. What does that show? Does it show that those men were insane? Such is the inference drawn by Moreau and Lombroso. But is it logical? Why not rather conclude that hallucination is not such an unfavourable symptom as we had supposed?

Moreau and Lombroso take it for granted that hallucinations only occur in mental disease. How do they prove that? Do not the very facts they adduce, if they be facts, disprove it?

We find a man full of crazy notions, with his self-consciousness gone, or with general loss of intelligence; and we mark him as unquestionably insane, and proceed to study the phenomena of his mind as symptoms of insanity. We meet another man whose achievements are positively great, who has, all his life long, excited the admiration and astonishment of his fellows, and who behaves in the most complete consciousness of what he is about. Ought we not to reckon him as sane beyond a doubt, and take his psychological processes as the very type of purely healthy phenomena?

Charles Lamb* says, "It is impossible for the mind to conceive of a mad Shakespeare." There is much truth in that. Shakespeare, however, is only known to us as a poet. Goethe is a better example, because we know him as a man as well. Indeed, we have a clearer insight into his inmost feelings than we have into those of almost any man that ever lived. If we wish to call up the typical idea of a perfect man we naturally think of Goethe. Whoever came into personal contact with him was ravished of his soul and inspired by the greatness of his mind. Heine, the poet of the senses, greets him as a "fiery spirit with eagle wings, as a genius of the whirlpool from top to toe";

* The sanity of true genius.

the Christian enthusiast Lavater terms him a genius whose characteristic was love; the sensible Jung-Stilling regrets that so few people were acquainted with the heart of this admirable man with the great, clear eyes, the beautiful brow, and the stately stature; the forcible Klinger writes that posterity will be astounded that such a man ever lived; and the poetical philosopher Jacobi holds it as impossible for any one who had not seen and heard Goethe to conceive of this extraordinary creation of God. It is ridiculous to desire that he should think and act otherwise than he does; that does not mean that no change could make him finer or better, but that no change would be possible any more than the flower could bloom otherwise, the grain could ripen otherwise, or the tree could grow and crown itself otherwise than it does. When he would walk down the Rhine between Lavater and Basedow—"a prophet to the right, a prophet to the left, and the world-child in the middle"—there was a picture of how he understood everybody and had something to proffer to everybody. It was because he aimed at all-sidedness, at a full and free humanity; and Wieland acknowledges that never in God's world did a son of man show himself who so combined all that was good and all that was mighty, who so deeply impressed himself upon every soul, and yet who lived so entirely within himself.

In entering upon the psychological analysis of Goethe, we are justified in assuming as a premise that we have here a case of a mentally sound man. Whatever we may find, however uncommon it may be, must be set down as a healthy condition. If, then, Goethe, as we have seen, was subject to occasional illusions of sense, it would be illogical to infer that Goethe was insane. We must rather conclude that we have been in error if we have been supposing that deceptions of sense occur only in the insane; and the problem set before us is to ascertain the distinction

between the hallucinations of the sane and the hallucinations of the insane.

It might be objected that, in spite of Goethe's greatness of mind, there was a supervenient morbid condition. But this assumption is directly contradicted by the fact that deceptions of sense are relatively frequent among famous men. Hence, even Moreau does not say that there is a supervenient disease by the side of, and in spite of, the mental greatness, but holds the latter to be itself a sign of incipient insanity.

I am therefore of the opinion that the sporadic sense-deceptions of famous men, like other so-called "morbid symptoms of genius" which we shall have to consider, can not be regarded as morbid symptoms, but that they are phenomena of health which it is the task of science to explain and account for.

The chief condition of mental sanity, as I have already several times remarked, is a well-proportioned development of the different psychical factors. But as in the development of the different mental faculties, so also in their proportion to one another, a certain latitude of health is to be allowed. In one man fancy is preponderant; in another, consecutive thought; while a third may have particularly strong feelings as his characteristic. Yet we have no reason to say that these minds transgress the border of health. It is the difference in the relation of the different psychical elements that makes the diversity of men's characters. Now we know that there are no two characters in the world that are precisely alike. It follows that there is no norm for these relations.

The higher the grade of development of the genius and of the individual, the more prominent will differences of psychical factors become, and a correspondingly greater latitude of health must be allowed. If a sculptor models a small statue, and in doing so makes a slight error, so that

there is a difference between the two sides, probably it will strike nobody. But let the statuette be five times larger, and the difference will become prominent, though the proportions should remain the same. In like manner, for persons of the highest mental development—the so-called geniuses—we have to use a larger measure. They appear to us like ordinary men seen through a magnifying glass.

We now proceed to examine the different symptoms which have been discovered in great men, and to endeavour to ascertain the distinctions between these and symptoms of insanity.

Moreau and Lombroso have collected a large catalogue of famous men who are said to have experienced hallucinations. I will not enumerate them all, but among them are Napoleon, Luther, Bernadotte, Benvenuto Cellini, Byron, Cardanus, Cromwell, Socrates, Brutus, etc.

It must be remarked at the outset that all the data are extremely doubtful. Everybody knows how the lives of great men become daubed over with anecdotes and tales, how—in part consciously, in part unconsciously—the facts are enveloped in a tissue of the most wonderful legends, until each great historical figure becomes surrounded by a nimbus. These inventions mingle with the real events; one writer copies them from another; the original documents are lost; and the tale becomes universally accepted as a fact.

Every psychiatrist is well aware that it is not always an easy matter to make certain that there are hallucinations, even when the patients are under our eyes. Neither the testimony of the patients themselves nor that of their guardians is, as a rule, sufficient to exclude the possibility of error; and the physician will, in most cases, form his judgment only upon his own personal observation. When it comes, then, to a notice, by a writer who has copied from some previous writer, of some hallucination that somebody

is supposed to have had several centuries ago, the fact cannot but be regarded as dubious. Plutarch, for example, informs us that during the night before the battle of Philippi the ghost of murdered Cæsar appeared to Brutus. Are we to accept this as a case of hallucination, without further information, or not? We should like to cross-examine the witness; at least to inquire whence he got his information. But that can not be done. Here is the whole passage:* "It was late one night. The tent of Brutus was dimly lighted, and a deep silence reigned over the whole camp. He himself was sunk in thought, when he suddenly thought he heard somebody coming. He looked toward the door, and saw there a dreadful and extraordinary sight. It was a dismal, frightful figure which silently stood by him. He ventured to ask it, 'Who art thou, man or god? What wouldst thou? Why comest thou to me?' The ghost answered: 'Thy evil spirit, Brutus. At Philippi thou shalt see me.' And Brutus without being terrified, answered, 'So be it.'"

Plutarch gives no authority for this statement. How can we determine to-day whether the narrative has any truth in it, or whether Plutarch has not repeated an unfounded legend? In another place† we read: "During that night the spirit is said to have appeared a second time before the eyes of Brutus. Its appearance was the same; but this time it disappeared without uttering a word." But Plutarch adds: "It is true that Publius Volumnius, a philosophical man and a follower of Brutus from the beginning to this battle, does not mention this portent." Plutarch thus seems to be himself doubtful about the fact. But even supposing Brutus really told of it, would that be proof of a hallucination? Might it not, considering

* Plutarch. Brutus, chap. xxxvi.
† *Ibid.*, chap. xlviii.

that it happened in the night, have been a vivid dream which Brutus, excited, as we may easily imagine him to have been, mistook for a reality?

Of Cromwell, Moreau tells us that once in his youth he was lying tired on his bed, but not yet asleep, when a woman of gigantic stature appeared to him and told him that he would be the greatest man of England. But who shall prove that Cromwell, while he lay on the bed, had not fallen asleep, so that it was only a dream? Or who will vouch for it that the worthy Cromwell may not have been partaking of the ale of merry England?

To prove that Luther was a hallucinant, Lombroso adduces the following narrative of the great reformer himself: "When, in the year 1521, I lived in my Patmos, in a room in which nobody except two pages who brought me my food ever set foot, one evening while I lay in bed I heard the hazelnuts move in their sack, and quite spontaneously throw themselves against the roof and all about where I lay. I was scarcely asleep when I heard a great noise, as if a quantity of nuts had been poured out. I raised myself and called out, 'Who art thou? I commit myself to Jesus Christ.'" Here, then, Luther himself admits that during the last event he was asleep. This circumstance, certainly significant to a psychiatrist, is left entirely unmentioned by Radestock, who reports the fact. Who knows in what form the story will next appear? Isolated hallucinations occurring at night in bed are, in all cases, decidedly questionable.

Hagen emphasizes this circumstance in patients: "At the commencement of insanity, and indeed throughout its course, vivid dreams are narrated by patients as if they were real events. They will say that they have been to one place and another during the night, or that they have seen heaven with all the angels. The true state of things may either be plain enough or, when patients sophisticate the

dream in their memory, no little pains and penetration may be requisite not to be misled, so as to take the dream for a subjective perception in the waking state."

This is a fair sample of the whole material; and I must openly confess that I should not easily be induced to erect a scientific theory upon such observations. At the same time, it is desirable to collect as many data as possible, in order to augment our stock of knowledge of great men. Yet we must not allow ourselves to be seduced into drawing positive conclusions from such uncertain facts.

But how sceptically soever we may approach these narratives, which are certainly in part legendary, they nevertheless contain some facts which cannot be avoided. That great men, as the example of Goethe shows, have had illusions of sense is an undeniable fact; and this is a phenomenon which we must endeavour to explain.

It is to be remarked at the outset that for the correct diagnosis of a case of hallucinations the most detailed knowledge of the phenomena of the case is requisite, for there are most diverse varieties of hallucinations; and their occurrence depends upon the most manifold psychological conditions. To enter upon all the facts and upon the different theories is, of course, not possible in this place. For such information the reader is referred to the extensive literature of the subject. There are only one or two points that I desire here to touch upon in order to avail myself of the knowledge of psychiatrists for the special inquiry now in hand.

Since Esquirol, who first thoroughly investigated the subject, psychiatrists have distinguished two classes of deceptions of sense. The first are those which are not suggested by any outward appearance; these are termed *hallucinations*. In the second there is an outward object exciting sensations which are misinterpreted in the percept, and filled out with imaginary details, so as to appear in a falsi-

fied form; these phenomena are termed *illusions*. The two kinds of phenomena pass gradually the one into the other, so that in many cases it is impossible to distinguish between them.

It has been remarked above that certain hallucinations of the insane have their perfect analogue in the reproductive power of sense-impressions. We can reproduce in the mind any object which we have often seen. This power is developed in very different grades in different persons. Usually the reproduced image is decidedly weaker than its original, both in its outlines and in its colour. In rare cases we find the reproductive power so much heightened that the reproduced image is almost equal to the original percept. Thus Lombroso * reports of a painter that "he was able to sketch as many as three hundred portraits a year. He only needed to look at a person attentively for half an hour, and after that could call up a hallucinatory vision of him which he would proceed to copy in painting with as much distinctness and confidence as if he were looking at a real person." This case is nothing but an intensification of a healthy action, much to the advantage of the artist concerned. It is certainly offensive to call such a gift by the name of hallucination. That, however, is a mere question of the usage of language. At any rate, such a phenomenon ought not to be confounded with insane hallucinations, for in the painter the action was under his control. He called up the "hallucination," if you will call it so, when it served his purpose to do so, and dismissed it when it had served his turn. The hallucinations which torment and affright persons of diseased minds arise spontaneously and will not go at the patient's bidding.

Meantime it is very doubtful whether the artist's recollected image was really as distinct and definite as the orig-

* Genio e follia.

inal percept. To determine that would require evidence of a widely different kind from the report of the writer Ball, who was Lombroso's informant. The fact that the painter was able to distinguish the recollected image from an object of direct visual perception, and did not mistake the face recollected for a face really there, would seem to show that his image differed from a perceived image somewhat in the same manner as do the recollections of ordinary people. But however that may be, such a phenomenon is certainly in no wise a morbid symptom.

Goethe describes the same faculty in himself. "My sensuous, apprehensive power is of so unusual a sort that I retain all outlines and forms most sharply in my memory; but I am moved in the most lively way by misshapen and defective forms. . . . Without that capacity for sharp apprehension and impression I could not have produced my characters so vividly and sharply individualized. This distinctness and precision led me, for many years, to entertain the delusion that I possessed a vocation and talent for drawing and painting."

If we consider Goethe, as above suggested, as an ordinary man whose mental powers are seen under a magnifying glass, we shall find it quite a matter of course that the intensity of his reproduced images should be increased relatively to the intensity of his directly perceived images in the same proportion as all the other psychical factors. Hence, if we find that the distinctness of his perception is not exceeded by that of his memory, this is a phenomenon which differs as widely as possible from an insane hallucination, and it betokens rashness and want of good sense to call his condition morbid.

In another passage Goethe describes a state dependent partly upon an excitation of the retina and partly upon heightened ideation, so falling into the class, not of hallucinations, but of illusions: "If I shut my eyes and, letting my

head hang down, thought of a flower in the middle of my field of vision, it did not endure an instant in its first shape, but separated, and from its interior a new flower unfolded itself of coloured and also green leaves. It was not a natural flower, but a fantastic yet regular one, like the conventionalized rosettes of the carver. It was impossible to fix the sprouting creation; yet it lasted as long as it was pleasing to me, without fading and without brightening. I could produce the same effect by thinking of the ornament of a variegated disk; and this immediately underwent a change starting at the middle and proceeding to the periphery, just like the subsequently invented kaleidoscope."

Just as sense-impressions can be simply called back to memory, so also new combinations arise by fancy, which therefore have the character of original creations. In persons whose fancy is powerful, the images of fancy, altogether in the same way as those of memory, can become so clear and distinct as to be very near to actual percepts. Lombroso reports: "The painter Montina thought he saw his pictures before him before he had painted them. When one day somebody stood between him and the place where he thought he saw his picture he bade him stand aside, so as to let him see what he was painting from." *

Here again the image was voluntarily excited, so that a doubt must remain as to whether it equalled a real sense image in clearness. The painter's bidding anybody who stood in the way to step aside was quite a matter of course. When we wish to reproduce a former impression of sense we try first to shut out all other impressions of that sense. When we wish to call up the image of a person we always shut our eyes. With open eyes most people are, however, capable of making such a reproduction, provided that none but lifeless objects are in the field of vision. But in talking

* Lombroso. *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

to one person and fixing the traits of his countenance, few people are able to call up the image of another person at the same time. In the same way, very few can recall one melody while another is heard.

Such phenomena are by no means rare among artists of lively fancy. They have nothing in common with the hallucinations of insanity. Hagen, therefore, calls them pseudo-hallucinations, Baillarger psychical hallucinations, and Kahlbaum apperceptional hallucinations. Von Kraft-Ebing* says: "Among artists this gift is found both in a simply reproductive and also in a fancifully deforming mode. The striking art of delineation of many an eminent dramatic artist, the plastic power of description of a Goethe, Ossian, or Homer, suggest such an endowment. Among some composers, too, the fineness of the instrumentation and the timbre of their tone poems lead us to suspect a specially fine and lively faculty of reproduction of their acoustic memory. Persons extraordinarily gifted in sensuous faculties can create hallucinations more easily than do those who are poor in fancy and who live in the realm of abstract ideas. This will readily be admitted. Even their recollections can sometimes be voluntarily raised to a plastic distinctness approaching hallucination."

So far, we have only considered cases in which deceptions of sense were voluntarily called up, whether by a specially strong faculty of reproduction or by a play of fancy. The subjects were quite aware that the object before them was fantastic and not real.

On the other hand, it is recorded of a considerable number of famous men in different departments that they have had deceptions of the senses which arose independently of their will, and were consequently genuine hallucinations. Among these we must place many religious visions, such as

* Von Kraft-Ebing. Lehrbuch der Psychiatrie.

those of St. Paul and other saints. Luther insists that he often saw the devil; and on one celebrated occasion he threw the inkstand at him.

Whether such deceptions of sense are to be regarded as morbid or not opinions differ. Many psychiatrists speak of hallucinations, and consider them compatible with complete health. Others hold that they are always symptoms of mental disorder. Hagen * occupies a peculiar position on this question, for he takes hallucinations to be invariably morbid symptoms, yet not symptoms of mental disease. This is connected with his theory that hallucination is a phenomenon of convulsion of certain blood vessels which I cannot here further set forth.

There is a quite arbitrary separation of psychical and somatic conditions at the bottom of this view. What Hagen means is, that the cause, or somatic concomitant, of the hallucination is a convulsion. It is presumable that every mental process whatever has a somatic concomitant, or "cause," in the organic vehicle of the soul. Hallucinations may have different somatic concomitants from other mental processes, but they cannot be supposed to be peculiar in merely having somatic concomitants. There are some diseases of the brain which are accompanied by no symptoms of derangement of the mind, and are therefore exclusively somatic diseases. But just as soon as the stimulation of a path of sense enters into a psychical metamorphosis, we have to do with a mental process. If this is morbid, we have to do with a symptom of mental disease.

That which determines Hagen to pronounce hallucination under all circumstances to be a proof of a morbid state is its relative infrequency. "Hallucination is in every case a condition departing from the norm." But if everything

* Zur Theorie der Hallucination. Allgemeine Zeitschrift für. Psychiatrie, Bd. xxv.

which "departs from the norm" is to be called morbid, then we return to the proposition that genius is morbid, since it "departs from the norm"; for the "normal" man is a tradesman and no "genius." But I can only meet Hagen with his own maxim, "Quod sola affirmatione affirmatur, sola negatione negatur."

It is a fact of daily observation that hallucinations can be produced by suggestion, and that not only in hypnosis but in the ordinary condition. If a woman who has never been electrified, and is therefore somewhat nervous, has the electrodes of a galvanic battery placed upon her head without the circuit being closed, while the faradic apparatus is caused to sound, she will not seldom imagine she feels the current distinctly, and perhaps complain that it is too strong. Though there is no current, the woman is positive she feels it. Every inward excitation, especially every emotion, favours such deceptions.

A timid or superstitious person is liable, in crossing a churchyard at night, to see figures, hear voices, etc. These deceptions may be of the class of illusions, shadows of trees being taken for ghosts, and the noise of the foliage for spiritual voices; or they may be pure hallucinations, the pseudo-perceptions not being formed by any outward sensations. An interesting case is described by H. Moore: *

"A whole ship's crew were thrown into consternation by the ghost of the cook, who had died a few days before. He was distinctly seen by all of them walking on the water with a peculiar gait by which he was distinguished, one of his legs being shorter than the other. The cook, so plainly recognised, was only a piece of an old wreck."

A child endowed with a rich fancy, whose mother has died, may, in the emotion of the pain and the excitement, see her image in heaven or hear her voice. Such phenomena

* The Power of the Soul over the Body, 1845, Part II, chap. vii. (5th ed., p. 170).

are by no means rare. They depend upon a rich and vivid fancy and a powerful emotion of the heart. This play of fancy, called forth by emotions and moods, has never been better described, in its external resemblance to insanity, than by Shakespeare in the Midsummer Night's Dream:

> Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
> Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
> More than cool reason ever comprehends.
> The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
> Are of imagination all compact:
> One sees more devils than vast hell can hold—
> That is the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
> Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
> And, as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.
> Such tricks hath strong imagination;
> That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
> It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
> Or, in the night, imagining some fear,
> How easy is a bush supposed a bear.

Deceptions of sense arising in this way have their origin in the most central part of the organ of mind. They are consequences of ideas. Such hallucinations occur, of course, in the insane, and to distinguish them from those of peripheric origin—that is, from those that are independent of the thoughts that immediately preceded them—Kahlbaum terms them centrifugal hallucinations, or phantasms.

As an example of such a phantasm we may instance a well-known hallucination of Goethe, who, when he was once riding to Gesenheim, saw his own counterpart riding toward him. "I saw myself coming along the same path on horseback toward me, dressed, as I had never been, in

pike-gray and gold. I shook myself out of the dream, and the figure was gone. But it is singular that eight years later, not at all by choice but only by chance, I found myself riding over the same path in the very direction my visionary self took, and clad in just those clothes, being again on my way to Frederica. Whatever the explanation of these things may be, the wonderful phantom gave me at that moment of separation some alleviation."

The emotion excited by the separation from Frederica was enough, with Goethe's lively fancy, to produce the phantom. Goethe himself judged his condition quite correctly. He recognised the shape as a fallacious one and said, "I shook myself out of this dream, and the figure was gone." It is very characteristic of the condition that Goethe should himself class it along with dreams. Obviously, the actual impressions of sight were, at the time of hallucination, not apperceived; and all that Goethe thought he saw at that moment was a painting of fancy, parts of the hallucination being superposed upon and congruent with the objects that had been seen an instant before. Goethe further says that the phantom gave him consolation and relief. It thus evidently answered to his thoughts; and we can presume that his fancy prefigured to him the moment when he should again visit Frederica.

The circumstance of hallucinations being recognised as such by the subject or not, is no more decisive for the diagnosis of the case than is the simple occurrence of deception of sense. Whether the hallucination is recognised as such or not depends more upon its contents and upon the metaphysical opinions, religious turn of mind, and superstition of the subject. Luther believed in the existence of a personal devil. His hallucination was the outcome of this belief—that is, of his ideas. Consequently his holding the fallacious object to be real was no insane opinion, but was in consonance with his metaphysics. So it is with the visions of

saints and prophets. We may admit that a considerable number of them were insane, but the hallucinations do not suffice to prove that every one of them was so. He who has devoted his whole life to religious meditations and tendencies and is fully convinced of the truth of his faith, who is penetrated with belief in the presence of a personal God, personal angels, tutelary spirits, etc., may, on an occasion of strong emotion, with a moderately lively fancy, have visions and hear voices, and hold them for real, without in the slightest degree justifying a suspicion of insanity. Such hallucinations, called forth by *suggestion* or auto-suggestion, occur less infrequently in men endowed with fancy. While Benvenuto Cellini was praying that God would once more let him see the sunlight a hallucination came to him. It was that of a landscape with the sun shining upon it. Napoleon, before important events, battles, etc., saw his star in the sky. Pascal, in consequence of a great fright, saw a precipice before him. If we are to accept Plutarch's story, the hallucination of Brutus is explicable in the same way.

The question whether hallucinations always betoken some unsoundness of mind can not be answered from a theoretical standpoint. Like the whole of psychiatry, it is a question of experience. Should experience show that hallucinations occur only among those whose minds are disordered, then we should be right in considering them as symptoms of derangement. But it is not so. Experience shows that sane persons, especially men of lively fancy, like great artists and poets, are subject to hallucinations; and though such phenomena are exceptional, and in that sense may be called not "normal," yet nothing could be more preposterous than to regard all those great men as subject to occasional disorders of mind, or as approaching insanity in any way.

I have shown above what an influence emotion can exert upon all the organs of the body. A permanent acceleration of the pulse is, as we know by experience, always a morbid

symptom. But would it ever occur to a pathologist to pronounce a person diseased because some emotion—such as fright, anxiety, or joy—made his heart beat faster? Emotion may produce in one man beating of the heart, in another vasomotor phenomena, such as blushing or blanching, and in a third any one of manifold nervous states, without there being anything morbid in those effects. In men of uncommonly strong fancy the emotion may sometimes call up supervenient hallucinations. But that is merely a phenomenon analogous to the beating of the heart, which we observe every day, except that it is relatively infrequent.

Hallucinations that are held to be true always make us fear for the preservation of an unclouded self-consciousness and of an unfalsified reaction between the ego and the outer world. In deciding whether, in a given case, hallucinations are to be denominated morbid, the decisive circumstance will be whether and how far the self-consciousness and free will have been influenced, and whether and how far responsibility for actions has been diminished.

Besides hallucinations, other phenomena connected with the rich fancy of famous poets and artists have many points of similarity with symptoms of insanity, and in many cases may lead to actual insanity.

Although we have seen that in Goethe's case the gushing fancy was always in harmony with the high faculty of his intellect, and that, in spite of the apparent independence of his fancy, it was nevertheless directed by the purpose of an intellectual will, yet in many poets we find this harmonic interaction seriously disturbed and the inward equilibrium deranged. Alfieri calls his condition during composition a fever. He says:* "That part of composition which I have called creation is a fever, and during its access one feels nothing else." And in another passage: "The whole day I

* Vita di Vittorio Alfieri scritta di Esso, Epoca 4ta, cap. xv.

pondered as I always do as soon as the fever by means of which I begin and carry through a work seizes me, I know not how."

Byron owns that his poetry is the dream of sleeping passions. If he be awakened, he can not speak its language, which he only knows while sleepwalking. Any shock or effort awakens the elasticity of his mind and always makes him what he must be. Of the third canto of Childe Harold, he says: "It is a fine piece of poetical desolation, and my favourite. I was half mad, during the time of its composition, between metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love inextinguishable, thoughts unutterable, and the nightmare of my own delinquencies. I should, many a good day, have blown my brains out but for the recollection that it would have given pleasure to my mother-in-law." * His biographer, Moore, says that Byron saw only the reflection of his own brilliant ideas in every new object.

Although such conditions are not quite pathological, yet they stand hard by the borders of insanity, and certainly indicate a decided disposition to mental derangement. Byron often fell into a state of melancholia, and showed manifest defects of a moral kind.

One of the most peculiar symptoms of some deranged minds is lying. All authors, without exception, who have treated of hysteria, emphasize lying as one of the most characteristic symptoms of that malady. Charcot † is astonished at the perseverance and energy with which hysterical patients understand how to deceive those about them. Numerous examples of the same phenomenon are recorded by Morel ‡, Lasègne, * and others. Delbrück ‖ has described a

* Letter to Moore, January 28, 1817.

† Charcot. Leçons sur les maladies du système nerveux.

‡ Morel. Études cliniques.

* Lasègnes. Les hystériques, leur perversité, leurs mensonges.

‖ Delbrück. Die pathologische Lüge.

special form of morbid lying, and has proposed for it the designation "pseudologia phantastica." As a general rule, this lying is not motived by personal interest, as, for example, to escape punishment or to attain some advantage; but it is some creation of fancy which is narrated as a true event. Such patients, mostly weak-minded, possess, in consequence of their small intellectual powers, a fancy very rich in proportion to their intellectual function. Such persons sometimes narrate whole romances as true occurrences, and may, upon superficial consideration, be taken for intellectual. Dr. Paul Sollier* also paints this symptom: "Among imbeciles, in opposition to idiots, an ungoverned imagination is often observed. This shows itself in their love of grotesque comparisons, which prove that they are capable of associating disparate ideas only remotely related to one another. This tendency is sometimes carried to an extraordinary pitch, and gives them a false air of being bright. On the other hand, we know how mendacious they are. They are all more or less so. They do not content themselves with simply denying anything of which they are accused. They invent a story quite different from the truth. Some of them do not stop at distorting the facts, but insert additional details, or make a story out of whole cloth. They not only do this to clear themselves, or to throw the blame on their comrades, but even when it is to their disadvantage —boasting of tricks they have not played, for the purpose of exciting interest and admiration."

While in imbeciles this impulse to express such pictures of fancy is to be regarded as a consequence of a degradation of intelligence, a similar condition is found in poetical men, owing to an overdevelopment of the ideation and the fancy. Hence it becomes interesting to trace out this phenomenon of "pseudologia phantastica" in the childhood

* Psychologie de l'idiot et de l'imbécile, 1891, chap. viii, p. 216.

of poets. Delbrück adduces as examples Goethe and Gottfried Keller, both of whom themselves remarked this symptom of their childhood. Goethe tells how he narrated to his schoolmates histories drawn from his fancy as actual events, and how he himself often wondered at their believing him. Later he passes this judgment: "Had I not gradually, in conformity with my nature, learned to convert these forms of air and empty boastings into artistic productions, such swaggering beginnings would certainly not have been without bad consequences to me. If this impulse be accurately observed, there may be recognised in it the same pretension with which the poet, as such, sets forth dictatorially the most improbable thing and requires the reader to take for true what in any sense appears true to him, the inventor."

In the previous chapter a characteristic of great poets and artists was described under the name of the impulse to expression, whose analogue in great men of a different constitution of mind, especially in those who follow science, takes the form of a creative impulse. This impulse which prompts the true artist to abandon himself unselfishly to his art and to produce what nobody has demanded, and spurs the scientific man to untiring research and opens to him new paths, is the most important mark of the truly great man. Hagen* says: "Just as the instinct of the beast impels him to certain actions though they cost him his life, so is it originally far less a conscious purpose than a force of nature which impels genius to producing, versifying, endeavouring. He is filled with one idea, and divided interests are impossible for him. A heroic genius, an Alexander or a Napoleon, conquers continually, not from mere desire of glory or of rule, but because it is his nature to make war upon others, and because continual victory is his natural

* Hagen. Ueber die Verwandtschaft des Genies mit dem Irrsinn. Allgem. Zeitschr. f. Psychiatrie, B. xxxiii.

need. In like manner the scientific genius knows no rest, but forever places before itself a new problem. It must equally always be conquering. The artist must ever be producing. Each man's action appears to him to be free choice. In reality it is so only in a very narrow sense. Genius acts less because it would than because it must."

So says Schopenhauer:* "Everything comes at last to this question, Where does the first motive—the *Ernst*—of the man lie? For almost everybody it lies exclusively in his own well-being and that of those that belong to him. Hence he is able to further that and nothing else, for no deliberate purpose, no voluntary and intentional excitation, can borrow the true, deep, personal *Ernst*, nor produce it, nor rightly replace it; for such a purpose is an attempt to wrench Nature; nor without *Ernst* can anything be but half willed. For the same reason, persons of genius look out ill for their own well-being. As a leaden counterpoise will always bring a body back to the situation which its centre of gravity requires, so the true *Ernst* of the man ever carries the force and attention of his intellect back to where it lies; everything else the man desires without true *Ernst*. Hence only those rare abnormal men, whose true *Ernst* does not lie in the personal and practical but in the objective and the theoretical, are able to embrace the essences of things and of the world as the highest truths, and to render them again. For such an *Ernst*, falling without the individual in the objective, is something foreign to human nature—something unnatural and supernatural. Yet by that alone is man great. And in accordance with that is what he does ascribed to something different from himself—namely, to his genius, which takes possession of him. Such a man has no ulterior purpose behind his images, his poems, or his thoughts; and everything personal is but means to those

* Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung.

as end. Other men seek the main chance, and generally know how to advance themselves, for they insinuate themselves with their contemporaries, ready to subserve their needs and whims. Hence they live, for the most part, in good circumstances, while the extêrnally centred man is in misery. For he sacrifices his well-being to his objective end. He can not help it. There lies his *Ernst*. With them it is the reverse; and that is why they are small and he is great. His work is for all time, though the recognition of it generally begins in future ages. But they live and die with their day."

This *Ernst* of the man of which Schopenhauer here speaks corresponds exactly with the above-described impulse to expression and to creation. The neglect of personal interests, the entire abandonment to his work, the restless strife for an ideal, are characteristics of the great man.

Here again we remark a surprising similitude between the so-called genius and many forms of insanity. But it is merely a similitude, and not an affinity, as Lombroso, Hagen, and others take it to be. For affinity supposes a community of essence deeper than mere similitude of external phenomena. It is this latter alone that we meet with here. The causal conditions are separated by the whole diameter of being.

In great artists and scholars on the one hand, and in the insane on the other, there is a great irresistible impulse which fills them to overflowing and makes them forget all personal considerations. But while in the former the restless compulsion to create, the hot aspiration, is the kernel of the highest and noblest perfection of man, in the latter there is a morbid impulse which is usually directed to the silliest things. Formerly such a state was called a monomania, since this irresistible impulse seemed to be the only pathological symptom; but careful observation has shown that there is always a more general psychical malady, usually the consequence of arrested development. It is perfectly

astonishing with what tenacity and untiring persistence such patients go to work. Trélat * reports a suitable example as follows:

"M. de W. is forty-five years old. He lives almost all the time shut up in his room, where he is supposed to be carrying on serious studies. He is seldom seen, and when he is seen complains of headache caused by overwork and the fatigue of his continued night labours. He has an amiable and accomplished wife. People talk to her about the health of her husband, and how wrong it is for him to misuse his forces, and beg her to influence him to pursue his studies with less ardour. She answers sadly that all her endeavours are vain; but she does nothing to shake the conviction of his friends, although she knows very well what she has to endure in this difficult situation. The poor lady is absorbed by her attempts to maintain the sense and dignity of her husband.

"In fact, he employs the whole time passed in his room in counting how often the same letter—*s*, or *t*, or *g*, or *z*—occurs in Genesis, in Exodus, in Leviticus, in Numbers, in Deuteronomy, in the books of Kings, in the books of Chronicles, in the book of Jesus the Son of Sirach, in the Song of Solomon, in the book of Revelation, etc. How many pages in one book begin with a *p*, with a *b*, with an *a*; how many end with a *t*, with a *c*, etc.

"Other studies of such seriousness as to cause this man of science to pass a fortnight without any attention to his toilette, or even washing himself, consist in counting all the contradictions he can find in the same author. Having passed one, two, or three years without interruption in these works, this indefatigable worker throws himself with the same ardour into taking his watch to pieces, down to its minutest parts, and putting it together again. During six

* Trélat. La Folie Lucide, quoted by Cullerre.

months he undoes every morning what he had completed the night before. Everybody who calls upon him receives the invariable answer, Monsieur is too busy to be disturbed. Everybody thinks that this writer is too modest to publish his book, and will leave behind Titanic works. The poor wife alone contrives to procure to so utter a nonentity honour and esteem to the last day of his life."

Here is a state of compulsory counting termed arithmomania. A great variety of such symptoms are distinguished. These interest us less as such, at present, than does the way in which they come about, the complete absorption of the mental action in the impulse, which shows much resemblance to the creative impulse of men of genius.

Those patients exhibit the same phenomena who may be termed inventors and Utopians. They not seldom sacrifice their means and bring themselves and their families to ruin by their unconquerable desire of making inventions and discoveries. They are fully convinced, in their folly, of the epoch-making importance of their improvements, and all pains are lost to cause them to desist from their ridiculous performances.

Morel had a patient who thought he could alter the weather and bring on rain. Lombroso reports the case of a patient who wrote a book entitled Dominatmosphere, in which he undertook to teach husbandmen how to get two annual harvests, and to put sailors in possession of a means of blowing the winds out of their way. The alchemists, who forfeited their lives in trying to make gold, the searchers for the philosopher's stone, were, for the most part, weak-minded persons of this sort. In modern times perpetual motion has been one of the great objects of crazy inventors. Trélat knew a man who had brought his family to want by his discoveries and inventions. He asserted that in order to bring a wheel into perpetual motion nothing was wanted but a supply of still water. In every dis-

cussion he objected to the competence of his opponent. To put an end to this, the physician of Bicêtre carried him to Arago, who proved to him that his inventions would not work. The poor devil was taken aback for an instant and burst into tears; but in a moment he raised his head and exclaimed with confidence, "No matter! Arago is mistaken!"

We have seen in the preceding chapter how important a part feelings and moods play in the psychical processes of great artists. In opposition to students, in whom the turning point of their mental action lies in the understanding, in artists moods and feelings are often the starting point of their productions. Hence we find that in them this part of the mental organ has not infrequently an enormous development. As with the other psychical characters, so likewise here we find that the high refinement of a single factor—always, however, in just proportion to the total action of the organ—produces outward phenomena having some similarity with those states which are due to disturbed inward equilibrium, and which we often have occasion to observe in the insane.

"Exulting to heaven, to death beaten down," expresses a temperament not uncommon among great poets and artists, causing those oscillations of moods which justify that reproach of caprice which is often addressed to them. This is one of the commonest symptoms of mental disease, above all of hysteria. But the similarity between the phenomena is merely external. They are rooted in widely divergent causal conditions. The practised psychiatrist will distinguish without difficulty between changes of mood such as Goethe observed in himself, which had their origin in the highest refinement of the psychical organism, and the capriciousness of a hysterical woman at whose bidding there stands always ready, in case of need, a rich well of tears, whose sluices have but to be opened to allow the never-drained stream to flow.

The restless energy of great men—who, with a new goal before their eyes, press ceaselessly forward, and who, as soon as they have climbed one height of science or of art, see new heights rise before them yet to be essayed—keeps them in continual discontent with themselves and their performances.

Fate such a bold, untrammelled spirit gave him
As forward, onward ever must endure;
Whose over-hasty impulse drave him
Past earthly joys he might secure.
Dragged through the wildest life will I enslave him
Through flat and stale indifference;
With struggling, chilling, checking, so deprave him
That to his hot, insatiate sense,
The dream of drink shall mock, but never lave him;
Refreshment shall his lips in vain implore.
Had he not made himself the devil's, naught could save him,
Still were he lost forevermore!*

In this destiny of Faust, Goethe painted his own sensations, and, like a genuine poet, in the particular touched the general. Goethe felt within him the restless mind which "drave him past earthly joys." He himself acknowledged that he could scarce call four weeks of his life happy. His feeling of misery incited him sometimes to thoughts of suicide, though he was always able to master it. He says: "Among a fine collection of arms I possessed a costly and sharp poniard. This I always placed beside my bed, and before I put out the light I would consider whether it would suit me to strike the sharp point a couple of inches into my breast or not; but since it never did suit, I laughed myself out of the habit, and, casting aside hypochondriacal grimaces, concluded to live."

Happiness and contentment are feelings denied to truly

* Bayard Taylor's Faust. From the scene in Faust's study just before the entrance of the student.

great men. And hence, as Aristotle says, those who have been eminent in philosophy, politics, poetry, and art have been predisposed to melancholy. But this kind of melancholy is as different as possible from pathological melancholia. Far from being of a morbid nature, it is an inevitable and eminently sane consequence of the psychical constitution of such men.

In contrast to it stands the self-satisfied good humour of degenerate simpletons, who are always convinced of their own merits and live in the most comfortable self-conceit. The dissatisfaction of the great man, which finds no relief but in creation and in ceaseless endeavour, is the noblest mainspring of the human race, to which all civilization is due.

In the mode of life of great men we shall find much that departs from the everyday habits of the conventional son of Adam. The Philistine, to whom all that is unusual appears unsuitable, is often heard to remark that great artists and scholars are all a little crazy. He says so because he unthinkingly confounds the uncommon with the irrational. The thinker will judge otherwise. The psychologist's business is to ascertain the causes of these phenomena.

Lombroso has, in his psychological researches into genius, adduced many such phenomena, and has dwelt upon their incontestable similarity with the symptoms of many insane patients. "What is observed in the insane has been asserted of the man of genius—that he walks solitary in the world, and solitary departs from it, a stranger to the warmth of family life and untouched by the charms of society." * But this is not precisely the fact. History sufficiently assures us that great men are frequently by no means strangers to family feeling. But what is observable in great men is that they are relatively indifferent to everything which

* Genius and Insanity.

does not answer to their inward endeavours, that the ideas of which they are full absorb their attention, and that they consequently seem uninterested in what goes on about them. For this reason the genius, like the madman, has been called a stranger to the world.

As we have already said, such egotism as often characterizes the insane is in the great man impossible. Self-forgetfulness is the first condition of true greatness. Nor is it accurate to call the poet or artist a stranger to the world. We have seen that Goethe had a rare insight into the world; nor can we conceive of a true poet without knowledge of the world. Jürgen Meyer is quite right when he says: "A poet who should sing what he had not seen and heard, but what he freely imagined without any experience of life, must sing without vitality. Creative fancy requires supplies from life, and can not draw its wondrous threads from out of its own body as a silkworm does." *

Here, as before, the similarity is merely external, and the determining causes are essentially different.

If the conduction of impressions over the nerves of sense is impaired or destroyed, so that the individual concerned is in a measure cut off from the external world, his attention will naturally be more directed to his inner life. Hence it is that people who become deaf or blind are apt to seem selfish. But without any defect of the conduction of the nerves a loss of perceptions may be brought about by a weakening of the perceptive centres or of the paths of association. Such weakening, which, in degenerate subjects, is not seldom very considerable, will, of course, result in a preponderance of inward perceptions. If there is a concurrent want of power of concentration of the attention upon outward things, as there generally is, we have the type of a person of weak mind, who is unable to comprehend the re-

* Jürgen Bona Meyer. Genie und Talent.

lations of things about him, who, occupied with himself, remains a stranger to the world, and who displays a characteristic selfishness and vanity.

No doubt poets and artists, as well as scholars, often exhibit an outward appearance of self-absorption and of indifference to their surroundings. This is common to them with many of the insane.* But how disparate are the causes underlying these phenomena! With the weak-minded it is the want of power to concentrate the attention which renders them uninterested and indifferent to the outward world; but with poets and scholars it is, on the contrary, the high degree of that power which brings about similar phenomena. As we know, the centrifugal condition which we term attention not only extends its power to the organ of sense whose action is emphasized, but it must also be able to order off all the rest of the impressions of sense. The great thinker appears uninterested in surrounding things because his whole attention is directed to the well-ordered sequence of his logical thoughts, to which end, with fullest consciousness, the outward impressions are ordered off. The weak-minded man is present at a performance. The sounds of the words of the orator ring in his ears, but the slightest outward or inward impression suffices to make his attention wander. His thoughts ramble. They are everywhere and nowhere. The mentally gifted man, on the contrary, constantly has his mind on the matter in hand. If he wishes to concentrate his thoughts upon an outward object, nothing that takes place is able to escape

* The Æsthetician Vischer says: "The man endowed with fancy is in the midst of the world truly solitary, for the one which he at present peacefully warms in his bosom is his world; and the empirical world has surrendered all its significance to this microcosm. Thus he is indifferent to the things about him, and seems to be out of himself. The reason is, that he is quite within himself, but in such a way that he does not distinguish subject and object within himself. What has come upon him is that the object and his subjective life ferment together; and he now listens unconsciously to this inward singing, sounding, and weaving." Vol. ii, p. 345.

him. His attention is stronger than the promiscuous spontaneous suggestions; and outward impressions of sense which do not relate to the matter in hand will not be apperceived.

The average man, when he walks the street, perceives all the impressions that strike his senses. He meets, we will say, two persons whom he knows, both of whom look him full in the face and fail to recognise him. They pass him by, and at the next crossing are nearly run over because they do not hear or see a coming vehicle. One of them is an idiot. His attention is not concentrated upon anything. He is drowsy, his thoughts breed lawlessly around, without being directed by his will. The second is a learned man who is occupied in solving a scientific problem. He is deep in his logical train of thought, and the requisite attention has ordered off all outward impressions of sense.

We see, then, that we have here a phenomenon common to the idiot and the genius. Yet how contrary are the causes of the two phenomena!

Lombroso sets up insensibility to heat and cold, to hunger and thirst, as a phenomenon common to genius and insanity. He brings forward this example:

"When Beethoven had sat down to compose, and Newton to study a mathematical problem, they so completely forgot the needs of the stomach that they would scold the servant who brought them a meal, under the impression that they had already eaten."

To explain this abstractedness Lombroso says:

"The unnatural tension of the power of sensation, and the consequent drain of all the forces and faculties, is undoubtedly the cause of this surprising behaviour found equally among men of genius and among the insane."

I do not think it is accurate to refer these peculiarities of genius to a "draining" or exhaustion. On the contrary, I

would rather explain it by the heightening of the mental action. In the concentration of the attention upon inward conditions, in which, as we have seen, the impressions of all organs of sense not directly concerned are ordered off, the feeling of hunger will not be perceived. Nor need one be either a genius or a fool to forget eating and drinking over an arduous work. Moreover, in extreme idiots, who are unable to concentrate their attention at all, as a rule a bestial impulse to eat is observable.

The insane refuse to take nourishment, or forget their bodily needs, from a great variety of causes. In one case, like that of a sane man immersed in his work, the attention may be directed to inward processes, and all the other impressions of sense may be ordered off. Only, the patient's inward process, instead of consisting in an ordered sequence of thoughts, is composed of hallucinations, which foster his whole attention; or he may have religious visions which so completely absorb all his senses that he not only feels no hunger but is insensible to all physical pain whatever. Another patient may decline food because he thinks himself persecuted, and believes the food is poisoned. A hallucinatory subject refuses to eat because a voice from heaven has forbidden him to do so. A victim of melancholia does not eat because he thinks himself too great a criminal to receive God's gift. A hypochondriac imagines his stomach is not in condition to digest food, and will not take food for that reason. Another may be unable to assign any reason for not eating, but still he will not do so. The outward effect is the same in all these cases. It is the business of the psychiatrist to trace out the causes, and thus diagnostically to estimate the symptom.

We thus see that neither the psychologist nor the psychiatrist ought to be content to observe behaviour superficially, but must trace out the motive of it in order to draw any inference from it. The most absurd conduct sometimes

has reasons consistent with health, while conduct which would not surprise a layman at all may be regarded by a psychiatrist as a well-recognised symptom of insanity.

A further explanation of many peculiarities of men of genius is to be sought in their relations to the society in which they live. A man with a reputation for high talents, distinguished from his youth for his superiority and genius, always has his circle of admirers with its proportion of flatterers. If he had the misfortune to be a precocious child he will have been accustomed from his earliest youth to the idea that his genius is far above ordinary men and above the rules that apply to those men. If such a man is, in later years, attacked by a competent critic upon this or that point, or if schools and parties are formed unfavourable to his method, whether in art or in science, he will, of course, react otherwise than a man would do who was accustomed to opposition of every description. He will, perhaps, regard his just critic as a personal enemy; he will complain that he is misunderstood by his contemporaries, and his passion may go so far that the public at large, and superficial observers among psychiatrists, may consider him to be the victim of a delusion of persecution.

Peculiar inclinations and other mental idiosyncrasies of men of genius can mostly be very readily explained. Everybody accustomed psychologically to study and dissect those whom he meets, so far as opportunity is afforded, is familiar with the remark that each individual of the human race has his peculiarities, more or less odd, his "weaknesses," his *locus minoris resistentiæ*, as we say in somatic medicine.

The ordinary man, if he has the least breeding, has been accustomed from his youth up to hold in check one inclination or another which violates the usages of society, or even perhaps of good morals. He has learned to attend sufficiently to his own conduct not to allow habits to take root which might appear unusual or be disagreeable to others.

But the man of genius is far too much governed by his inward processes, his fancy, and his work, to pay attention to trifling details of manner. He therefore appears what he really is, while the average man would not do this. Consequently chance peculiarities and special inclinations appear in the former more than in the latter.

Thus it is that the behaviour of great men is not to be measured by the same standard as that of others, that we have to take account of the motives of their actions, and that the psychical conditions must be kept in view if we are to draw any trustworthy inferences from their behaviour. Those mighty natures must be judged from their own organization, and not from the Philistine standpoint of the so-called average man.

As a further proof of the affinity of genius to insanity it has been alleged that a great number of eminent men have actually had attacks of insanity. Among poets are mentioned Lucretius, Tasso (who suffered from periodical melancholia with hallucinations and fits of excitement), Lenau, Swift, and Reinhold Lenz (who died insane). Hölderlin was thoroughly mad during the greater part of his life. Lessmann suffered from melancholy and committed suicide. Von Sonnenberg, Southey, and Ben Jonson were likewise attacked by insanity. Molière had repeated fits of melancholy. Rousseau suffered during much of his life from insanity.* Gutzkow and Cowper were insane; also the French poets Berthes, Dubellay, Duboys, Bataille, Baudelaire, and Guy de Maupassant. Kleist, Merk, Raimund, Stieglitz, Louise Brachmann, and Nerval committed suicide.

Insane students of nature were Swammerdam (who was attacked with *melancholia religiosa*, thinking he had insulted God, and therefore burned his writings) and Albrecht von Haller (who was also melancholy). The mathematician

* See P. Möbius. Krankengeschichte Rousseaus.

Bolyai, Cardan, and Johann Georg Zimmermann were likewise insane. So was the celebrated physiologist Johannes Müller, who committed suicide.

Among insane philosophers may be mentioned Auguste Comte and Engel.

Of composers who were attacked by insanity, Schumann and Donizetti are examples. Gounod had a superinduced insanity.

Insane painters were van Goes, van Leyden, Wiertz, Carlo Dolce, etc.

The question whether we are justified, from the alleged frequency of insanity among famous men, to draw any conclusion whatever—as, for example, in regard to a predisposition to insanity among great minds, more than among average men—or that there is an intimate connection between genius and insanity, can only be answered from the standpoint of experience.

That is to say, it can only be based upon severely critical statistics. But we are very far from possessing any data that are even approximately sufficient. If we are to go to work scientifically, of what use can a list of famous men who have been insane be to us? Even were the number of examples multiplied by ten, what could be inferred? The question is not whether there have been great men who were insane, but whether the proportion of those who have at some period of their lives been attacked by insanity of different types has been markedly greater or less among famous personages than among the general run of mankind.

In order to decide this, we should be in a condition to state with exactitude what the percentage of insane among the total population was at a given period of history, how many men of genius there were at that time, and how many of these were insane? Such researches must be repeated at different times of history; then, if they were irreproachably exact and sufficient, it would be possible that some conclusion

might be drawn. But we can not even make such comparisons for the present day, far less for bygone ages. The most we can do to-day is to count the inmates of asylums. But extremely few of those insane geniuses who have been reported were ever confined in asylums. Most of them belonged to that class of deranged persons who are cared for by their family. Manifestly, then, sufficient statistics fail us, even for the present time. Everybody will see, without going further, how futile it is to make a list of insane poets from the early Roman literature to the end of the nineteenth century, and to offer this as supporting any assertion of the kind. Do but consider how hard it is for us to attain any reliable conclusions upon matters much more within our control. For a long time there has been a serious dispute among psychiatrists as to whether there is any connection between syphilis and general paresis. Both are accurately limited and well-defined terms, and not, like genius and insanity, two terms, neither of which can be defined. They are perfectly typical and exactly characterized forms of disease. Yet all the researches of the two parties have been powerless to settle the question. The most diverse theories about the matter still find numerous defenders.

There has also been an attempt to trace a connection between genius and insanity through facts of heredity. In spite of some valuable works in this department,* it must be admitted that the observations hitherto adduced are still far from sufficient to have any scientific value. The fact that in several families of eminent men insanity has occurred in no wise justifies us in drawing any conclusion. In order to do that we must, as in the former case, be in a condition to establish statistical comparisons which shall be *absolutely exact* between the proportionate occurrence of insanity in the families of men of genius and those of ordinary

* Ribot, Heredity; Francis Galton, Hereditary Genius, etc.

men. The past must therefore be left altogether out of account; nor is it any exaggeration to say that the difficulties of establishing the facts for the present time with absolute exactitude are unconquerable. Independently of all else, the flexibility and indeterminacy of the terms of the question—genius and insanity—give room for inexactitude in the conclusions.

Every disinterested observer must be struck with the contradictions and inadequacy of the investigations that have been made in this field. Lombroso, for example,* says: "Galton and Ribot remark that genius is as hereditary as insanity, and that especially the gift for music, which drives so many into the madhouse, is transmitted from parents to children. Palestrina, Benda, Düssek, Stiller, Mozart, and Eichhorn all had musically gifted children. The Bach family presented to the world eight generations of musicians, and among them fifty-seven individuals distinguished themselves not a little. Among painters of renown, von der Weld, von Eyck, Murillo, Veronese, Bellini, Caracci, Correggio, Mieris, Bassano, Tintoretto, Caliare (uncle, father, and son), all sprang from families which were more or less occupied with their art. Among poets, Æschylus had two sons and two grandsons who were poets; Swift was the nephew of Dryden; Lucian was Seneca's grandson or nephew; Torquato Tasso was the son of Bernardo Tasso; Ariosto's brother and nephew were poets; two sons of Aristophanes were dramatists; Corneille, Racine, Sophocles, Coleridge, were each the father or grandfather of a not insignificant poet." But in flat contradiction to this stands the following assertion of Lombroso: † "Moreover, the inheritance of genius does not occur so easily as it otherwise would for the reason that men of genius are often childless and often have degenerate offspring, as we see in the lines of noble

* *Ibid.*, p. 72. † *Ibid.*, p. 76.

houses." Thus he amply refutes his own previous proposition, and saves other people the trouble of doing so. To prove his last point he says: "Schopenhauer, Descartes, Leibnitz, Malebranche, Comte, Kant, Spinoza, Michel Angelo, Newton, Foscolo, and Alfieri were unmarried; and those great men who did not shrink from the bonds of wedlock, like Shakespeare, Dante, Arzolo, etc., found no happiness in that life." As if celibacy, or an unhappy marriage, could have no other cause than impotence! Other psychiatrists have remarked the sterility of great men. Thus, Arndt says:* "Hence we often see, I might say without exception, that genius makes the summit of the family tree, or at least is the last living twig of one branch, which bears many flowers and fruits, but loses its capacity of putting forth new shoots in creating genius. Thereafter it buds but scantily, or even loses the power of doing even that, but comes to an end without progeny."

This opinion is somewhat exaggerated, as Lombroso's own report shows; and we should lay ourselves open to the charge of inexcusable superficiality were we to attempt to erect a scientific theory upon such a foundation.

It is true that between famous men—the so-called geniuses—and the insane many resemblances may be traced. Nevertheless, they are, as we have seen, mere resemblances, not real affinities. Just as every symptom of mental disease has its analogue in health, so has it also an analogue in genius. But, owing to the entire mental action being higher than in average men, the states analogous to morbid symptoms here come out more markedly. Genius resembles insanity as gold resembles brass. The similarity is merely in the appearance. When we go deeper into the facts we find the two states so widely disparate that we are not justified

* Lehrbuch der Psychiatrie, p. 197.

in saying that they are allied; still less, with Moreau, that genius is a morbid condition.

Finally, let the fact be considered that most of the great men, both of art and of science, were misunderstood by their contemporaries, and were only appreciated after they were dead. In recognition of this truth, Goethe pronounces that a genius is in touch with his century only by virtue of his defects, only in so far as he shares the weaknesses of his times. The genius of the truly great man outstrips, with its great wing strokes, the rest of the flock. Those who can not keep up with him can not comprehend him. They are puzzled at first, and finally set him down as a fool. In short, they confound genius and insanity.

DEGENERATION.

THE riddle of heredity is yet unsolved. The seed corpuscles and the *ovum*—the male and female germinal substances—through the coalescence of which the new individual is created, not only transmit bodily characters from progenitors to progeny, but psychical peculiarities too, and thus convey family traits from forefathers to posterity. Of the fact experience assures us, but as to its biological causes nothing has been disclosed.

In the great catalogue of diseases, somatic and psychical, heredity plays an important part. This has been undisputed since Hippocrates. In most cases, however, it is not a definite disease which is inherited, but a diathesis, a predisposition, a want of resistance to all baleful influences of the direct exciting causes of disease.

In this way heredity is an important element in all pathogeneses, or origins of disease; and it is especially so for derangements of the mind. The inheritance may either be a direct one—from parent to offspring—or an indirect one. In the latter case it is either atavism, or reversion to the characters of grandparents, or there is a collateral inheritance from an uncle or aunt.

Essentially distinct from heredity is gradual and progressive *degeneration*—a phenomenon first profoundly studied by Morel de Rouen.* Morel schematizes it as follows:

First Generation: Nervous temperament; moral depravity; excesses.

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* Traité des Dégénérescences Physiques, Intellectuelles et Morales.

Second Generation: Tendency to apoplexy and severe neuroses; alcoholism.

Third Generation: Mental derangements; suicide; intellectual incapacity.

Fourth Generation: Hereditary imbecility; deformities; arrested development. With this last generation the race comes to an end by sterility.

Besides a long list of mental symptoms, Morel has collected a number of stigmata, or bodily marks, which he has observed in degenerate subjects. These are many kinds of deformities, want of equality in the two halves of the face or other bilateral parts, irregularities of the skull, protruding or unlike ears, overgrown ear-laps, squinting, stuttering, deformed teeth, too few or too many fingers, atrophies or abnormal formations of the organs of sex, etc.

Morel called these phenomena phenomena of *dégénérescence*. This has been translated into German by the term *Entartung*. The German word implies etymologically a departure from the *Art*—that is, the species, the normal form—and might be applied to any chronic disease, whether somatic or psychic. It need not imply, as *degeneration* does, a progressive pining away of the race till it is extinct.

In the course of time, however, this point has fallen out of sight. Modern writers, and especially the French author, Magnan, who has very industriously worked upon the subject, leave almost unnoticed the question of progressive pining ending with the extinction of the race, and place the whole emphasis upon the heredity. Magnan employs the terms *dégénérés*, *héréditaires dégénérés*, *héréditaires*, indifferently. Möbius directly declares that it is convenient to replace the expression *hereditary* by *degenerate*.*

Thus it is that at present the expressions *Belastete* (af-

* See the introduction to Psychiatrische Vorlesungen von V. Magnan. Transl. by P. J. Möbius.

flicted), *Hereditarier* (hereditary), and *Entartete* (degenerate) are used promiscuously. The fact that such diversity of expression reigns is due, in this department as elsewhere in science, to the habit of quarrelling over words instead of making their meaning clear. So von Krafft-Ebing, for example, terms paranoia exclusively a psychosis of degeneration, and, in order to refute Mendel,* who questions the degenerative significance of the disease, advances the argument that paranoia is only found among the "afflicted."† Now, "affliction" and "degeneration" are two entirely different things, which have few, if any, common features. Many paranoiacs have perfectly sane children, and therefore in Morel's sense they can not be called degenerate. Paranoia is likewise found in perfectly sane persons at an advanced age; and in them there can be no *Entartung* or *degeneration.*

The term "hereditary affliction" means, in psychopathology, merely that disorders of the nervous system existed among the person's progenitors. The man himself may thus not be deranged at all. In fact, great numbers of the hereditarily afflicted are perfectly healthy. As I have said, hereditary affliction plays an important part not only in degeneration, but in the majority of mental diseases; and consequently we shall do well to keep the terms "heredity" and "degeneracy" distinct.

The forms of disease described by Morel under the name of *dégénérescence* are referred by him and his adherents, especially Falret, exclusively to hereditary affliction; and a "hereditary insanity" without qualification has been spoken of. But we have seen that, on the one hand, a pathogenic significance belongs to heredity in most psychoses; while, on the other hand, it has been proved that the so-called

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* Realencyclopädie der gesamten Heilkunde.

† v. Krafft-Ebing. Lehrbuch der Psychiatrie, 4th ed.

"hereditary insanity" or "*dégénérescence*" is found in persons who have had no insanity in their families; so that there would be here a "hereditary insanity" without heredity.

These facts shatter the very essence of Morel's doctrine; and so it came about that want of clearness of terms has led to many misunderstandings and much diversity of expression. If, then, we are to hold fast to the term *degeneration*, or *Entartung, this must be understood to embrace all cases of defective development of the psychical organ.* Degenerates are mental monstrosities; degeneration *κατ' ἐξοχήν* is idiocy.

The causes of degeneration—that is, in good English, of *degeneracy*—may be divided into three classes, as follows:

1. *Degenerative Hereditary Transmission.*—This concept is essentially different from the above-described simple form of inheritance. In *simple* heredity nothing is transmitted but a predisposition, the individual being radically sane. *Degenerative* hereditary transmission implies a diseased germinal substance, which may lead to progressive degeneration of the posterity. The disease of the germinal substance is in many cases due to actual poisoning, more especially by alcohol. Many authors insist that chronic intoxication is not requisite, but that if drunkenness supervenes during the act of copulation, it suffices to transmit a degenerate state to the offspring.*

2. *Intra-uterine Disturbances of Development.*—Here are to be placed infectious diseases of the mother during pregnancy; bad nutrition of the embryo in consequence of cachectic states of the mother, such as rickets, etc.; deformities of the pelvis, and consequent compression of the skull;

* Compare von Krafft-Ebing, p. 179: "Wonderful as it is, cases adduced by von Flemming, Ruer, and Demeaux prove the fact that even children of otherwise temperate parents, whose copulation took place in a fateful hour of drunkenness, are extremely disposed to mental derangement, especially to diseases of the nerves. This bad interferential effect may show itself from birth as inborn imbecility (*Schwach und Blödsinn*)."

injuries to the head in delivery by instruments, and in consequence of accidents to the mother during pregnancy, etc.

3. *Extra-uterine Disturbances of Development.*—Such are injuries to the head, infectious diseases, and the like, in early childhood.

As regards the clinical portrait of degeneration, there have been many attempts to divide it into classes and to establish specific forms of disease under this genus. Morel divides the degenerate into four classes, as follows:

The first embraces all those persons in whom there are no particular anomalies, whether of the intellect or the heart, but who are characterized by a so-called nervous temperament. Among them are neurasthenics, hysterical women, and people who, while very eccentric, are fully conscious of their own state.

In the second class are those persons who, while their intellectual powers are unimpaired, display a decided disturbance of their feelings and impulses, and consequently great defects and perversity in morals.

The third class contains imbeciles whose mental weakness is limited to the intellect, so that the instincts hold sway over their understanding.

In the fourth class are found idiots in whom the whole mental development is extremely low.

This and other classifications are purely arbitrary. These classes gradually pass into one another, and single examples show the most diverse combinations. In consequence of the disturbances of development in degeneracy the quintessence of the malady is to be sought in the disproportion in which the mental factors stand to one another. Thus Magnan * says of the degenerate: "Doubtless the essential thing is the discord, the want of balance of the mind." Hence, in diagnosing the mental state, it is not enough to

* Psychiatrische Vorlesungen von Magnan. Transl. by P. J. Möbius.

inquire into the degree of general mental development that the intellect, for example, may have attained, for there are some men who are dull, as well as those who are bright. But one main problem must be to determine the proportions which the different mental factors bear to one another A short-legged man is just as healthy as a long-legged man, but if the relative development of the two legs is different, one being longer than the other, there is a state of disease, though each leg singly be sound. So it is with the mental powers. If the feelings and moods are relatively more strongly developed than the other mental characteristics, so that the latter depend too much upon the former, there will be a relatively hysterical condition. With a disproportionate development of the fancy, delusions and hallucinations may occur; while an excessive development of the impulses, at the expense of the sensations, joined with intellectual weakness, may lead to moral insanity, since here the characteristics known as conscience, pity, etc., do not exist. Of course, these are not universal, unyielding rules, for every case has its singularities and must be studied and diagnosed for itself.

The clinical morbid picture of these degenerates may be very manifold. As might be expected on theoretical grounds, there is scarcely a symptom in psychiatry which may not occasionally be observed in the degenerate, since the disproportion of the single mental powers among one another may produce the most diverse combinations.

That which distinguishes degeneracy from other diseases of the mind is precisely the absence of any type in the occurrence and history of its symptoms. While in chronic paranoia a systematized fabric of delusions is found to which patients adhere in its unaltered form, and which only at the end becomes mollified in the general death of the intellectual powers, in the history of the degenerate, on the other hand, we find the most variegated medley of symptoms wildly

succeeding one another. At one time there are imperative ideas, imperative impulses, and other such supervenient states; then we see delusions emerge in them; but, unlike those of the mad, they do not arise and remain systematically, but are only temporary, and are characterized by the absence of any marked type. "The fabric of delusions," says Magnan, "has in the degenerate particular marks. Whether it be delusion of greatness, or delusion of persecution, or religious, or hypochondriacal delusion, or whatever other variety, it appears without preparation, is often multiform, and whether it lasts a longer or a shorter time, it never goes through a series of determinate periods." *

Manifold diseased sensations and impulses play a great part in degeneracy, and are often motives to the most surprising behaviour. Magnan has described a great many impulses and antipathies or syndromes, and terms them the mental stigmata of degeneracy. The most important are the following: The mania for asking questions; the mania for subtleties; the mania of doubt; aichmophobia, or fear of points, in which needles and all pointed objects put the patients into agony; agoraphobia, or fear of public squares; claustrophobia, or fear of inclosed places; dipsomania or periodic passion for drink; sitiomania, or irresistible longing to eat; pyromania, or the impulse to set things on fire; kleptomania, or the passion for stealing; oniomania, or the impulse to make purchases; zoöphilomania, or morbid love of animals; onomatomania, or compulsion to seek for a particular word; arithmomania, or compulsion to count, etc. These diseased impulses and antipathies, whose number is very great, never occur singly, so as to form a proper variety of insanity, as was erroneously assumed in former times, thus giving rise to the term monomania. On the contrary, they always form a mere partial phenomenon of a diseased

* *Op cit.*, i, 2.

state of the nervous system, consequent upon the discord of its several factors.

Here, too, belong the numerous sexual anomalies described at length by von Krafft-Ebing. These, too, never constitute a disease proper, but are mere symptoms of a general malady. If, therefore, it is required of a psychiatrist to ascertain whether an act which conflicts with morals and with law is to be considered as pathological or not, he must not consider that act by itself. He will have to find out whether or not the mental conduct of the person who committed it is insane independently of that act.

The morbid symptoms of degeneracy are, as we have said, of the most various description, and cases in which the symptoms are decided can be diagnosed without difficulty. Since such cases strike even the general public as insane, the relatives of such patients call in medical aid. The consequence is that those degenerates that are known to practising physicians are, for the most part, those of typical imbecility, perverse sensations, etc.

It is very different with those *dégénérés supérieurs*, in whom no direct phobias, manias, imperative ideas, delusions etc., are present, but in whom there is merely a disturbance of the mental equilibrium, so that Magnan terms them simply *unbalanced*, *déséquilibrés*. In such a person every single mental faculty may have attained a degree of development which surpasses the average; and yet the proportion of the different mental factors to one another may be so abnormal that the mental balance is destroyed; and thus the discord may be so prominent that the person in question, in spite of his seemingly high mental development, may be mentally deranged.

An acquaintance with this class of degenerates is important, not alone for the mad-doctor, but for every physician, every jurist, every historian, every art critic, every pedagogue. In short, every person whose duty it is to pass

judgment upon men should interest himself in this form of degeneracy, for men thus afflicted have at all times exercised great influence upon the arts, the politics, and the whole civilization of their countries—all the more so that the public have not recognised that they were insane, but have allowed them not infrequently to play parts in social life.

One of the characteristic marks of these degenerates is their highly emotional nature and the incalculable oscillations of their mood. Although in great men, in consequence of the extreme refinement of their mental organism, the moods and feelings are capable of very wide modulation, so that Goethe said of himself that he passed in his moods from one extreme to the other, yet in them this phenomenon is strictly limited to their subjective sensation. Men of undisturbed mental balance remain ever masters of themselves, and do not allow themselves to be hurried into irrational acts. In spite of all the oscillations of his inward state of heart, Goethe, as seen from without, was always the same distinguished, consistent, imposing figure. This marked the greatness of his character, the proportionate development of his different mental factors, his pure harmony of soul. In spite of the bold leaps of his luxuriant fancy, in spite of the great exaltations and depressions of his moods and feelings, the great *ensemble* of his psychical organism was governed by his forceful thought; his every act was guided and determined by his intellect.

In the degenerate, on the other hand, sudden gusts of passion and fluctuations of moods not infrequently lead to the most singular and eccentric acts. Their intellectual action is not able to set limits to their impulsive feelings. Inward excitement runs unbridled into outward manifestation. Irritable to the highest degree, touched by the slightest impressions, they frequently react in the most passionate way upon the most insignificant occasion. No occurrence is

too indifferent or insignificant to excite an emotion in them which hurries them into the most incredible acts.

The circumstance that, with the degenerates, the emotion leads to a total superseding of the intellectual capacity, and may then drive them, in their utter irresponsibility, into acts of violence and crime, has often led to the opinion that there was something morbid in that emotion itself. But this is a superficial view, not in consonance with the facts.

A man capable of no emotion, whom no mental stimulus is able to get out of the common ruts, is like a stupid mule that keeps on its way undisturbed, without regard for the strokes of the whip, and with unmoved composure, though a cannon were discharged by its side. Such dulness is found among a class of degenerates, including the idiots. The sane man is usually capable of emotion, but he knows how to govern and curb it by the action of his intellect. Emotion in the sane man as an expression of a legitimate sentiment is beautiful, at times even sublime. This is true even of anger. The blushing maiden repelling unworthy propositions, the anger of the man whose honour is assailed and who seeks satisfaction, have of a surety nothing unwholesome, and will hardly be confusible with the uncalled-for passion of the degenerate.

A phenomenon frequently observed among degenerates is an abnormally lively fancy, which appears in childhood, and renders any purposive thought impossible. Such children are inclined to dreaminess and so-called thoughtlessness. Their mental powers are sometimes pretty well developed, but they can make no use of them because their dreaminess permits no persistent logical thought. They have to be incessantly shaken up. At school they are inattentive and never follow the matter in hand. In their earliest childhood they have lively dreams, often wake up with a dreadful shriek, in what is called *pavor nocturnus*, and sometimes have deceptions of sense. Proneness to invent stories is a

characteristic of these children gifted with fancy, and their tales are narrated as actual occurrences. This is the *pseudologia phantastica* of Delbrück. At the age of puberty they are often attacked by that kind of self-nursed anguish which the Germans called *Weltschmerz*. They indulge in sentimental effusions, and often perpetrate all sorts of eccentric follies. In later life they fall into that class of minds whom we call dreamers, enthusiasts, Utopians, and mystics. Their luxuriant fancy, directed by no purposive will or intellectual plan, attracts them to whatever is occult, incomprehensible, and wonderful. From his youth up such a man is not habituated to look plain facts in the face, but gives himself up to building castles in the air and to useless trifles. He lives in dream-land; his metaphysics (for every man has a metaphysics or general conception of the universe, a *Weltanschauung*) is not built upon outward experience, but is the outcome of his peculiar experience, which is one of mystical notions spun from the body of his fancy.

In this class belong these religious fanatics, the prophets, the founders of sects, and the like, who in earlier times were able to exercise no little influence upon the course of history. Religious enthusiasm and the fanaticism of religious sects, which linger yet in North America and in Russia, are in great part phenomena of psychical degeneration. But in our days the fantastics and Utopians have largely turned aside from the early forms of religious enthusiasm to spiritualism, occultism, and other varieties of mysticism. Most of what is written to-day upon spiritualism, prophetic dreams, clairvoyance, second sight, and such matters springs from morbid, degenerate brains, in which the creations of fancy take the lead, and the intellectual action is too weak to exercise a rational criticism. We meet such persons in every department of life. They make their appearance as philanthropists and as political agitators, discoursing with pathos

and fervour upon the subjects they least understand, inciting one class of society against another, and setting up as champions of labour and as apostles of freedom. Though they themselves understand nothing about the matters of which they speak and write, being utterly incapable of subjecting their fancies and mysticisms to logical criticism, yet they are thoroughly impressed with their own merit and greatness. Their gift of clothing the absurdest notions in fine words enables them to infatuate the masses, and they often collect about them a mob of admirers. The untenable and contradictory character of their doctrines and promises little disturbs the silly multitude that applauds them, although their imbecility is readily detected by rational thinkers and close observers.

Sometimes it happens that the defective development of the intellect in such persons affects only one part of it, while some intellectual characteristics are highly cultivated. Degenerates are found who have remarkably good memories and good capacity for learning. They may even acquire vast erudition, although they have no capacity for turning their knowledge to account. Their fancy gets the better of their intellect, and throws the manifold residua of former impressions of sense into a promiscuous and confused heap. They lack the power of concentrating their attention exclusively upon one object. The procedure of their thought reminds one of a rudderless craft given over to the caprices of the winds and waves. The extent of their erudition may, upon a slight acquaintance, lead one to think them bright and intelligent. But, owing to their lack of power of arranging their ideas logically, they will never be able to accomplish anything of any consequence, and the instability of their mental conduct will not escape the expert observer.

History is rich in examples of such individuals. The Roman emperor Claudius, whose imbecility is beyond question, acquired, in spite of his intellectual weakness, a solid

mastery of the Greek tongue, and possessed marked talent as an orator. He also composed an extensive history. Apart from these powers, he was a typical degenerate. Before he became emperor he had a mania for hearing lawsuits as a judge, and, owing to his simplicity and inability to reason logically, he was generally the butt of the lawyers. On one occasion his written decision read that "he gave his vote for those who had spoken the truth."*

In still other degenerates we find a well-developed action of the intellect combined with an almost total absence of feeling. The moral sense, sympathy, pity, love, etc., are conditions utterly strange to such people. They act from cold calculation. Selfishness and heartlessness mark all their acts. Those curmudgeons whose sole satisfaction is the heaping up of wealth, to whose life all ideal features are foreign, who stick at no legal means of attaining their selfish ends, who are not only without feeling for the sufferings of their fellow-men, but are even cold and indifferent to their nearest family, belong to this category of mental degeneration.

This unfeeling nature, combined with certain proportions of other mental factors, will result in the so-called moral insanity, and when prudence is deficient or circumstances push to it, produce the worst criminals. We often find not merely a deficiency of feeling, but a positive perversion of sentiments and feelings. Acts which other men perform with anguish and horror occasion them delight and contentment. Where others feel pain and sympathy they feel pleasure and a glow of comfort. Such mental states may lead to bestial cruelty and to an incredible pitch of brutality.

History affords numerous examples of this. The Roman emperor Nero had evil inheritances from both parents. In-

* W. W. Ireland. Herrschermacht und Geisteskrankheit. Stuttgart, 1887.

sanity and epilepsy were prevalent in both families. His father, Domitius Ahenobarbus, was so low in the moral scale that it was said of him that he would have been the worst man of his age if his son Nero had not lived. Suetonius reports that when they wished him joy at the birth of Nero he remarked, "The offspring of me and of Agrippina can only be a monster who will scourge the world." Everybody knows that the inclination of Nero for cruelty, lust, and dissipation passed all bounds. His behaviour when he had Rome set on fire, admired the spectacle from afar, and recited verses painting the destruction of Troy, is quite typical of a degenerate. Yet he was not without talents of an intellectual kind. The vanity which led him first to appear in Naples as an actor, singer, and charioteer, and later carried him to Olympia, whence he returned richly adorned with prizes, was decidedly characteristic of his mental degeneracy.

Moral insanity in its furthest extreme is illustrated in the later Emperor Commodus. As a youth he displayed a lust and cruelty which amounted to mad fury. His whole pride was in his extraordinary bodily strength. To imitate Hercules, he often appeared clad in a lion's skin and armed with a club. He appeared as a gladiator seven hundred and thirty-five times. His joy in murder knew no bounds. He often had the companions of his orgies slain from simple delight in bloodshed. It was a pleasure to him to bleed a man.

We not infrequently find degenerates who, in spite of their defective development, have brilliant talents in special directions; and such persons may attain high consideration on account of their achievements. Their endowments are, however, always one-sided, and, whatever their capacity, they are wanting in logical thought, energy, and force of will. Whether in these cases the hypertrophy or overgrowth of some parts, with consequent talents in certain departments, is to be regarded as a consequence of the general

disturbance of the development—this partial capacity being gained at the expense of the development of other parts—or whether we have a highly refined organism in which particular parts are atrophied or backward in their development, we are at present unable to decide. Each opinion has something to support it from a theoretical standpoint, and it may be that both cases occur in fact, so that different causes lead to the same effect.

Sometimes such a partial development—limited, it may be, to a single intellectual capacity—is found in a mind that is otherwise a blank. There have been high-grade idiots who have had a decided talent for music or painting, and who have now and then accomplished something remarkable in one of these directions. An interesting example of an idiot with an enormous development in a narrow, intellectual line is that of the calculator Dase.

A partial gigantic growth is the somatic analogue of that partial mental development. Of this Ranke says:* "A light is thrown upon the morbid affinities of gigantic growth by the numerous cases in which partial gigantic growth has been observed. Single parts of the body, especially the extremities, sometimes attain immoderate dimensions. In rare cases, one entire half of the body has had a gigantic development. At other times a single limb, or only one hand or one foot, or even only one finger or one toe, has been affected." Ranke explains partial gigantic growth, as well as partial dwarfing, as deformities due to perturbations of development during fœtal life. Here, then, is a perfectly exact somatic analogue of mental degeneracy. The same discord between single parts, the same disturbance of equilibrium, is due to the same general cause—disturbances of development during fœtal life.

It is well known that injuries to the heads of children

* Ranke. Der Mensch., vol. ii, p. 136.

originally sane produce mental degeneracy, and even complete idiocy. Many writers teach that such injuries have not infrequently caused hypertrophies of single mental faculties. Lombroso reports as follows: "Cases are by no means rare in which accidents, such as usually result in mental derangement, injuries of the brain, and fractures of the skull, have converted a perfectly commonplace soul into a man of genius. Giovambattista Vico in his youth fell to the ground from a high ladder, and was taken up with a fractured brain pan. Goetry, originally a simple chorister, became a great composer after a heavy beam had fallen on his head. Mabillor, who possessed very small capacities, attained all his greatness in consequence of a wound in his head. Hall, who narrates this, knew a Dane who was in his youth semi-idiotic, and who showed great talent after he had fallen from a ladder and had struck the ground headforemost." *

The term "genius" appears to be applied by Lombroso, here as elsewhere, in a pretty broad sense. Moreover, in many such cases it is impossible to ascertain whether the mental development took place by reason of, or in spite of, the injuries of the head. It is certainly possible, according to the general analogies of degeneration, that a partial hypertrophy was occasioned by the accident. This seems the more presumable since analogous cases have been observed in somatic medicine. Thus Ballinger reports a case observed by von Buhl. It is that of the giant Thomas Hasler: "Thomas grew quite normally," says Ballinger, "up to his ninth year. About that time he was kicked by a horse in the left cheek. He soon began to grow monstrously. He ate a great deal, particularly of butter and other fat fare, common enough in his country in the Bavarian mountains. At eleven Thomas was so large that he had to leave off going to school because the seats were not large enough.

* *Op. cit.*

Gradually the bones of the skull and face thickened, and that not merely on the side where he had been kicked. After he was full-grown he ate little. Every motion he made involved effort and fatigue. He attained the age of twenty-five, the weight of three hundred and forty-one pounds, and the height of seven feet three inches." *

The one-sided mental development of the degenerate, the brilliant gifts in special directions at the expense of the development of other psychical powers, is generally called "genius"; and this confusion of ideas, this confounding of those powerful minds whose high capacity of achievement consists in a general refinement of the psychical organism with those individuals of whom instability and mental discord are the characteristics, and whose partial mental overdevelopment is a consequence of derangements of growth, has, in no slight measure, contributed to the belief that there is a real affinity between genius and insanity—that is, that those great men who have always decided the fate of mankind are results of morbid conditions.

Between the instability or disturbance of the mental balance and the so-called normal average man there is, as we know, a gradual transition. No sharp line can be drawn here between mental health and mental disease. There is also a gradual series connecting fully endowed men of genius and those partially developed degenerates. But to establish any affinity between them on that account would necessitate an equal affinity between "normal average men" and common degenerates. The same reasoning would conclude an affinity between the Philistine and the degenerate who suffers from moral insanity or imbecility.

If we are to give the name of genius to the great men in different departments we might very well term a degenerate with partially conspicuous development a *pseudo-genius*

* Ranke. *Op. cit.*, ii, p, 135.

(*pseudogenie*). But to accomplish anything really great, a partial mental development is not enough. A correct combination and balance of all the mental faculties are needed to thread that thorny path and to climb the steep heights which lead to immortality. Those characteristics with which we have become acquainted in great men, that of concentrating undivided attention upon an object, indomitable energy and staying power, the unselfish, self-forgetting compulsion to create—these qualities are found in the degenerate either not at all, or in insufficient measure.

In those partially gifted degenerates, those pseudogeniuses, certain typical characteristics are hardly ever wanting. In childhood they already show that vanity and self-sufficient arrogance, that foolhardy conceit which never leave them through life. While they are still schoolboys they speak contemptuously of the greatest men of art and science. Raphael and Titian were bunglers in their estimation. They compassionately shrug their shoulders over the "Philistine Schiller," who ought long ago to have passed into oblivion. Goethe is no longer "up to the times," and his creations have been "greatly overrated." Such is the trash which they utter as boys. They learn nothing at school, partly because they are incapable and slothful, and partly because they are so convinced of their genius that they hold learning to be for them superfluous. They are of the opinion that much knowledge might damage their originality, their genius, and that their high inward merit needs no adventitious augmentation, They leave school as soon as convenient, but not to learn a trade or, by the study of years, to train themselves to any specialty. They enter the world at once as accomplished poets, writers, painters, or musicians. With the most secure self-confidence, which is never wanting to these subjects, they devote themselves to the most difficult departments. They write dramas, novels, and romances, paint, compose, feel

themselves to be judges of art and critics, and write about matters far above their mental horizon.

Often enough their works carry the stamp of the silly and ridiculous. In place of the renown and applause upon which they had calculated, scorn and ridicule are their portion. But that will not shatter their faith in their own merit and genius. They rather complain that their fellow-men do not appreciate them or else envy their powers too much to acknowledge them. The truly great man who is in advance of his age and is not understood by his contemporaries feels an unaffected pain at that; but he wends his way as best he may, and perseveres in his endeavours as long as good sense permits him to do so, and very often longer. The degenerate, on the other hand, is soon discouraged by failure. He retires from society, considers himself a "misunderstood genius," looks upon every man as his enemy, and develops in later years a decided mania of greatness and persecution.

Other degenerates have, partly by their higher gifts, partly by the want of discrimination of the community in which they live, greater success with their works. Their so-called "originality of genius," which often enough deserves to be called original madness, is able to infatuate the multitude who fancy that the gabble of these persons makes a "new departure" in art and the beginning of a new epoch.

Well says Kant of this class of men: "But one guild of these so-called *men of genius* (better, monkeys of genius) is placed under this shop sign; they speak the language of minds extraordinarily favoured by Nature, declare laborious learning and research to be dull-minded, and profess to have seized the spirit of all science at one clutch, and to dispense it in small doses, concentrated and strong. This race, cousins of the quacks and criers at fairs, is very prejudicial to progress in scientific and moral culture. They pronounce in decisive tones upon religion, politics, and

morals, as if they were illuminated and adepts, envoys from the throne of wisdom, while their secret object all the time is to conceal the real poverty of their minds. What else is there to be done but to laugh and continue patiently at our industry, without regard to those mountebanks?" *

Not infrequently the perverse impulses and sensations of the degenerate are reflected in their artistic production. The Roman Emperor Commodus had a rough animal strength. He also had an impulse to bestial cruelty, and received pleasure and satisfaction from bloodletting and from the sufferings of others. Now, that impulse, that pleasure, and that satisfaction were marked in that strength of his. In like manner, degenerate writers have similar impulses and sentiments; and they give expression to them in their writings. Many modern literary men love to wallow round in sloughs and puddles, to sweep forward what is dirty and vulgar, and to amuse themselves with such things. This preference may in many cases be accounted for by such a perversion of the feelings and by a mental degeneracy. Other abnormal impulses, especially of a sexual origin, appear in the works of degenerates.

Instability and want of mental equilibrium hold the higher degenerates in a continual unrest. Of patience and perseverance they have next to none at all. They precipitate themselves with zeal into a subject, and very soon give it up. They are mostly occupied with themselves. The world and all it contains only so far interests them as it is the vehicle of their precious selves and what can hurt or help them. In everything they betray the same egoism. It is typical and characteristic of their souls. Nobler sentiments, demanding self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice, are alien to the degenerate. Hence they are unacquainted with the ideal feelings of friendship and love. Cicero

* Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht, § 56 (§ 57 in some editions).

says: "Amicitia non esse potest nisi inter bonos," and he might well have added "et mente sanos." Never among degenerates can such a bond of friendship be found as is frequent among great men. Conformably to the proverb, "Birds of a feather flock together," degenerates are often attracted to one another. But their intercourse, rooted as it is in mere selfish interests and morbid impulses, is more like that of the inmates of a monkey's cage than the self-forgetful and ideal friendship of men.

The degenerate ever remains a stranger in the world. To comprehend what goes on in the world, to understand and appreciate the acts of his fellow-men, one must be able to feel with them. But the degenerate is either wanting in the intellectual power necessary to comprehend what is taking place, or, if that be not his defect, then his feelings and sentiments are too narrow to enable him to make use of his perceptions. Hence, when the degenerate poet undertakes to paint the world, it is not the world we live in that he brings before us, but a fantastic invention of his brain, the counterpart of his morbid ideations. In case he belongs to the subjective class of poets, who embody in art their own sentiments and feelings, he gives us a peep into an abyss of aberrations and morbid sufferings.

It were vain to attempt an exhaustive description of the clinical appearances of degeneracy. The morbid symptoms are too manifold, the characteristics too diverse, the combinations of mental factors in disturbed equilibrium too numerous, and new phenomena are perpetually presenting themselves to the most experienced psychiatrist.

As an example of a degenerate painter who attained some consideration and was even the originator of a "new departure" in painting may serve the Frenchman Courbet, often called the "first realist." According to Rosenberg,*

* Rosenberg. Geschichte der modernen Kunst.

who gives a somewhat detailed account of him, he had a very defective schooling, although his father sent him to Paris at the age of twenty to study law. His spelling was atrocious. "The sight of a book excited his anger, and he recoiled from the presence of an inkstand." In the genuine imbecile style he ventured the following judgment upon the old masters while he was yet a student:

"Veronese was a superior man, a painter without weakness and without exaggeration, an honest painter. Rembrandt bewitches the intelligent and astounds the simple. Titian and Leonardo da Vinci are impostors. If one of these two were to come back to earth and were to pass through my studio, I should go for my knife. Ribera, Zurbaran, and Valasquez before all excite my admiration. Ostade and Craesbeek seduce me. Holbein I revere. As for Mr. Raphael, he has undoubtedly painted some interesting portraits, but I can find no thought in him."

He possessed a quite monstrous self-love, and loved best to paint his own portrait. "He imagined he had an Assyrian profile, and that imperative idea only strengthened his preference for his own physiognomy." A visitor to an exhibition of his pictures remarks: "With three or four exceptions, all the rest represent Courbet himself—'Courbet bowing,' 'Courbet promenading,' 'Courbet standing still,' 'Courbet lying down,' 'Courbet seated,' 'Courbet dead,' Courbet everywhere. Nothing but Courbet was to be seen."

In his morbid vanity he endeavoured, in spite of his slight mental capacity, to get himself talked about in reference to every possible subject. Rosenberg reports: "In his immoderate vanity he boasted that since the cross of Christ no other cross had been so much talked about in the world as his own. His letter to the minister,* which had

* On his refusal of the cross of the Legion of Honor.

been composed for this illiterate man by one of his friends, he had concluded with bombastic phrases which sufficed to crown him, in the eyes of the Irreconcilables, with the civic garland of an incorruptible republican. "I am fifty years old," he wrote, "and I have ever lived a free man. Let me end my life in freedom. When I am dead, it must be said of me: This man never belonged to a school, nor to a church, nor to an institution, nor to an academy—above all, never to a government, not even to the government of liberty."

Courbet played an extremely ridiculous part in the year 1870, as a member of the Commune, at the pulling down of the column of the Place Vendôme.

"Before the court-martial, the poor, vain soul did all he could to repel or at least to mollify the charge brought against him. He was punished with that with which he had erred. He was not a bad man but a mere simpleton, whom his intolerable self-love had led into a path where he did not belong. He regarded himself as a universal man, when he was at best only a painter. His too highly rated and too much disparaged works had made him known and had enabled him to live comfortably. His absolute want of fancy, the insurmountable difficulty which he felt of 'composing' a picture, had brought him to found the so-called 'realism'—that is to say, the exact reproduction—of natural objects, without distinction, without choice, as they presented themselves to view. Men attacked the ideas of Courbet. His pictures were sent back from the *Salon*. He proclaimed himself a martyr, sincerely considered himself to be persecuted, and so became a great man. People were wrong; they should have left him a free field and not tried to render innocuous the revelations of an undoubtedly imperfect, yet in many respects interesting talent. Courbet became a sort of leader of a school, or, rather, head of a sect. Many nobodies flocked about him and recognised him as their master. By the side of these naïve persons, who

dreamed of wishing to paint without having learned to paint, were grouped banterers who liked to laugh, and for whom Courbet was a standing source of delight. They flattered the vanity of this heavy-witted peasant, who replaced wit with malignity, drove him to all sorts of follies, told him he was a national economist, a moralist, a philosopher, and a statesman, and encouraged him to speak, while they drank the beer to which he treated for the sake of finding listeners." Again: "The painter was of the opinion that the glory of the emperor interfered with his own, for his pictures seemed to him more important than victories, than the *concordat*, or than the *code civil*."

After he had been condemned by the court-martial to six months' imprisonment for the overthrow of the column of the Place Vendôme and had served out his time, he often called out boastingly in the streets and on other occasions: "I destroyed your column. I will pay for it." Finally he was taken at his word, and again accused. He was obliged to flee. After long negotiations an agreement was reached between him and the Government, according to which he was to pay annually ten thousand francs. He soon after died suddenly.

Here, then, was a mental degenerate who, in spite of his pathological action of mind, possessed unquestionable talent, but, owing to lack of ideas of his own, and his incapacity to produce anything independent, had to content himself with reproducing what he saw.

This art of mimicry in itself, joined to that kind of "realism" which endeavours to elevate the ugly and to suppress the beautiful, necessarily produced, for a time, the illusion of originality, with some, perhaps, of genius. Thus it came to pass that Courbet was almost the founder of a school.

A great number of degenerates are found in literature. Lombroso has collected a list of such cases and given them the name of *graphomaniacs*. This is not a very happy desig-

nation, for, according to the analogy of the other manias—kleptomania, pyromania, etc.—*graphomania* ought to mean the irresistible passion to write. It would refer to the physical action, and would depend upon the quantity of writing performed. But the majority of Lombroso's cases are distinguished by the peculiar contents of the writing, and a special compulsion to write much only appears in a few cases.

The passion for writing is found in different forms of disease, and there are frequent opportunities to see it in the asylums. A patient whom I myself had occasion to observe, a woman suffering from paranoia, had formed a system of delusions upon which a new religion was to be founded. She was constantly occupied in the erection of churches and schools, and wrote about these things almost all day. During several years she had filled a great number of *cahiers*, and wrote ceaselessly letters to magistrates, personages of high position, etc., in which she frequently covered the inside of the envelopes with characters. What made the case particularly interesting was that she had constructed her own language and her own characters, of which she commonly made use.

Another case, which was that of a mathematician, was a worn-out *hebephrenia*, or insanity of youth, which had passed over into terminal dementia. The patient answered all questions with a few stereotyped phrases. Going into his room, you would usually find him working at his table. He had, in the course of years, written a stately number of blank books full, and that in so small a hand that a magnifying glass was necessary to make them out. He sometimes wrote mathematical formulæ which for the most part could not be deciphered.

The common symptom of these cases might very well be termed *graphomania*. Of course, like the other manias, it is only a symptom, a partial phenomenon of the disease, for

we know by experience that no monomania exists. Such a mania can not form a disease *sui generis*.

Lombroso, who repeatedly speaks of "monomaniacs," describes "graphomania" as an independent malady. He says: "A sort of mental disorder which I might call graphomania forms the link between the fool of genius, the sane man, and the insane proper."

Both Lombroso's "fools of genius" and "graphomaniacs" are mental degenerates. In all these people there is a disturbance of the mental balance, a disproportion between impulse and intellect, and in most cases a marked lowering of intelligence, a general weakness of mind.

Lombroso divides his graphomaniacs into different classes. Of one he says: "These are given to excesses, whether of abstemiousness or of unbridled appetite for food; also to the most singular sexual excesses, which I have cursorily noticed in my work upon Insane Love (paradoxal, ideological, zoölogical love). They also have singular fondness for dogs, cats, birds, etc., and still more singular inclinations to tear up and destroy, say, costly ornaments. They throw themselves from moving railway trains. They shun the light and only go about at night, and not even then unless provided with a sunshade. They fear abode in closed rooms so much that they faint if they hear doors shut; or else they hate being in the open air, and refuse to cross public squares," etc. Further on we read: "These men are often overmastered by a hatred of their fellow-beings. They withdraw into remote regions, and flee all contact with men (claustrophilia). Others, again, although they prolong existence in an evil life, crave society, whose cancers they are; long for the admiration of others, be it only such as can be excited by the most insignificant things, such as collections of buttons and of umbrellas. They let slip no means, however ridiculous, to draw attention to themselves. They write love-letters to themselves and read them publicly, or

disturbance of the development—this partial capacity being gained at the expense of the development of other parts—or whether we have a highly refined organism in which particular parts are atrophied or backward in their development, we are at present unable to decide. Each opinion has something to support it from a theoretical standpoint, and it may be that both cases occur in fact, so that different causes lead to the same effect.

Sometimes such a partial development—limited, it may be, to a single intellectual capacity—is found in a mind that is otherwise a blank. There have been high-grade idiots who have had a decided talent for music or painting, and who have now and then accomplished something remarkable in one of these directions. An interesting example of an idiot with an enormous development in a narrow, intellectual line is that of the calculator Dase.

A partial gigantic growth is the somatic analogue of that partial mental development. Of this Ranke says:* "A light is thrown upon the morbid affinities of gigantic growth by the numerous cases in which partial gigantic growth has been observed. Single parts of the body, especially the extremities, sometimes attain immoderate dimensions. In rare cases, one entire half of the body has had a gigantic development. At other times a single limb, or only one hand or one foot, or even only one finger or one toe, has been affected." Ranke explains partial gigantic growth, as well as partial dwarfing, as deformities due to perturbations of development during fœtal life. Here, then, is a perfectly exact somatic analogue of mental degeneracy. The same discord between single parts, the same disturbance of equilibrium, is due to the same general cause—disturbances of development during fœtal life.

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* Ranke. Der Mensch., vol. ii, p. 136.

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* Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht, § 56 (§ 57 in some editions).

is analyzable into impressions of sense, their associations, and ideas due to associative suggestion. From this discovery the author undertakes to demonstrate the theorem that "Schiller could never have written Laura am Klavier if no piano and no Laura had existed." To examine such nonsense would be a waste of time. A windmill can not make meal unless it is fed with grain, as every child knows, but, nevertheless, it is not the grain that runs the mill, but the wind. Were all impressions withheld from a man as far as possible, as in the case of Caspar Hauser, it is certain that, even in a man capable of developing genius, mental action would be at a standstill. But for all that, impressions by themselves could effect nothing were there no mental powers to react upon them. The best education can not convert a dullard into a sage nor an idiot into a genius.

To treat of the importance of education and set forth its psychological principles in full would be the theme of a large book. I limit myself here to some considerations which lead me to regard education as of great importance for the development of character, particularly in the case of a genius.

A child that from its earliest childhood is accustomed to suffer want and to see vice and cruelty necessarily has its feelings dulled. How far in later life heart and sentiment may appear will depend upon the proportion which the evil influence may bear to its original and natural disposition. A child in which the exercise of the intellect is altogether neglected will, at all events, be in later years less strong than if it had had a solid training of the understanding. The same thing, *mutatis mutandis*, is true for the other mental characteristics—attention, the power of apprehension, memory, the action of association and suggestion, fancy, will, energy, perseverance, etc. All these powers are capable of being greatly affected by exercise and custom.

Experience shows that even with ordinary men impressions received in youth are the most durable, and in many respects may have a momentous influence upon the whole life. In a child endowed with genius this must be true in much higher measure, for such a child, even in its earliest years, observes surrounding events with marvellous acuteness; it assimilates its impressions much more thoroughly, and infers much more from them than an ordinary child. Moreover, owing to its lively fancy, it will be much more affected by all influences, whether good or bad.

Thus Nohl* says of Mozart: "Even as a child he was full of fire and life; and without the admirable education which his earnest and strict father gave him, he might have become the most reckless miscreant, so sensitive was he to every excitation to whose good or bad influence he was of an age to respond." When Goethe in his sixth year heard of the great earthquake at Lisbon, in which sixty thousand persons were swallowed up in the twinkling of an eye, religious doubt arose for the first time within him, and his faith in the goodness of Providence was shattered.

Great men have in most cases shown uncommonly high mental capacity in their tenderest years. But this is not true without exception, for there have been geniuses who were quite ordinary children. On the other hand, it is a fact that frequently children that have matured early and seemed to be highly gifted have not in later years fulfilled the promise of their childhood. In part this may be a purely natural phenomenon, due to no outward causes. But in many cases the outward circumstances are traceable; and in particular a bad education has been to blame for the loss to the world of the fruits of, perhaps, an important genius.

Education is the foundation upon which the whole man is

* Ludwig Nohl. Biographie Mozarts.

built up. Youthful impressions are not only decisive in their effect upon the development of character, but they may even induce a predisposition to diseases of the nerves and of the mind. It is altogether probable that, among the innumerable cases which are set down as hereditary nervous diseases, a considerable percentage is due less to actual inheritance than to the impressions which a child has received from a hysterical mother or from a father given to drink, combined with a defective education.

Von Krafft-Ebing* says: "Next to the organization of his brain, a man has to thank his education for the idiosyncrasy of his mental existence. Sometimes organization and education co-operate in calling forth psychopathic predispositions, for parents not only in procreation transmit an unfortunate organic constitution, but also upon the ground of this organization afflicted with morbid passions, moral faults, and eccentricities, further communicate their eccentricities and moral transgressions to their children by their bad example and by mistaken education."

Griesinger† says: "We agree with Ideler in thinking that there are cases of so-called hereditary insanity which are not principally due to the transmission of an organic disposition. A later psychical propagation of characteristic peculiarities takes place. The child imitates the example of certain eccentricities and of certain bizarre and perverse tendencies and views of life; and this hinders the commencement of the development of a healthy soul harmonizing with the outward world. In this way hysteria may be communicated from a mother to a daughter. So, too, may foolish or half-foolish parents infect their children with mental distortions; and so passionateness and evil inclination may set their impress upon young minds. It is to be added that by such a state of the parents family life is

* Lehrbuch der Psychiatrie.

† Pathologie und Therapie der Geisteskrankheiten.

often discomposed, and thus the co-operation of those happy circumstances which are essential requisites for the harmonious development of the child's character is destroyed."

It is not of the first consequence in education, especially with precocious children, what and how much the child shall learn; for the lacunæ of knowledge can, by the exercise of energy, always be filled up. But the faculty of apprehension, the capacity for logical thought, attentive concentration, close observation, etc., are things which must be exercised from youth up; and it is very difficult to make good in later years any deficiency which education may have left in these respects.

Care must be taken that the bodily training does not lag behind the mental. This is specially requisite for precocious children. Their ambition must be restrained within limits. They must not be allowed to give themselves over to enthusiastic dreamings. Conceit and vanity should be checked by hard facts. Moreover, such children are particularly liable to a too early awakening of sexual impulses and other sexual irregularities which require the closest attention from their tutors. It is of great importance that children should early appreciate the fundamental conceptions of morals, love of truth, the obligation of a promise, unselfishness, etc. Yet too great an emphasis upon these things is to be avoided, since the contrary effect may easily be produced, inasmuch as for the attainment of the desired result love and faith on the part of the child are requisite above all. Of the greatest importance for the formation of character are the development of the heart, refinement of feeling and sentiment, which must be implanted in the child from its earliest childhood. "Much can be effected under unfavorable circumstances by an intelligent education. This must be adapted to the individual and free from pedantry. It should be directed not to the formation of the intellect alone, but also to that of the heart. This is the point in the importance of

which pedagogy, rightly conceived and treated, joins with the doctrine of heredity." *

On children of lively fancy and fine feelings, stories about fabulous things and supernatural phenomena often have a bad effect, above all when they are made use of to put children into a fright. In some dispositions such methods of education may induce severe hysterical states. "This detestable method of bringing up," says Mosso,† "has not yet disappeared; children are to this day agonized with stories of Knecht Ruprecht, of fabulous monsters, werewolves, magicians, and sorcerers. Every minute somebody says to children: 'He will eat you up'; 'This bites you'; 'Call the dog'; 'There is the chimney-sweep'; and a hundred other terrors which bring them to tears and deform their friendly character by distressing them with constant threats, by a system of torture which makes them timid and weak."

Children that are inclined to dreaminess, in whom fancy is active and threatens to dispossesses the pure intellectual action, require particular care, so that the child may as early as possible receive a strong impression of the realities of life, and that there is in those realities a stern and inflexible order, and as truthful a general idea of what that order is like as possible. Pains must be taken to prevent nurses' tales, religious mysticism, and mythological fictions from overexciting the fancy. It is in the knowledge of real things and facts—first, the sense that there is a reality altogether different from fancies; second, that it is undeviating in its order; third, something of what that order is like—this must be the turning point of education for imaginative children. If these precautions are not taken by their parents, those children of fancy will be filled with images utterly foreign to the real nature of things. Then, in later years, when life presents itself to them in its naked truth, and castles in the

* Schüle. Klinische Psychiatrie.

† La Peur, Paris, 1886.

air come tumbling over their heads, they will find themselves astray in the world, with nothing to protect them but fine words unintelligible to the citizens, and will be hooted at and run down as cranks and monkeys of genius.

While the superintendence of the scientific education is the affair of the father and of the pedagogue, it is the mother's duty to look after the formation of the heart and the sentiments. And what a momentous charge is this! Think what that is to a man! Think what it is to a man of genius! And what wonder is it that it should be popularly believed that all great men were remarkably influenced by their mothers? Alas! Alas! How many of the women of to-day see in this holy duty their highest throne, their completest royalty? Modern economy compels many women to work, and therefore to economize their intercourse with their children. In such a case the fault lies with our social institutions and not with the poor mothers, although there are even hard working women, who somehow contrive to care for the corporal well-being of their children, and for their spiritual health and nourishment too.

But how is it with well-to-do ladies, who have time and means enough to spend upon their children? Do they, for the most part, see in the education of their children the great purpose of life? Do they feel their highest bliss in self-forgetful, loving surrender of themselves to this natural office? Yes, there are such mothers; and the number of them measures the vitality of our civilization. They receive the supreme homage which is their due. They receive it in their persons, and it is extended to every woman who can be presumed to fulfil that function or to be about to fulfil it. The vulgar throng of women are not of that sort. Many women are honest enough to confess that the education of their children is burdensome to them and that they find no pleasure in it. They shift the irksome burden to the shoulders of a stranger. Some mothers are foolish enough

to think that a mother's love could be replaced by money. They believe that they fulfill their duty by seeing that their children's food is wholesome and their clothes handsome. Perhaps they hire accomplished governesses or send their children to expensive bording-schools. But can a stranger ever replace a true mother's heart? No, never. Children who have lost a mother are to be pitied. But children whose mother lives and is only such a guardian to them as those above mentioned are in far worse plight. The former can at least carry in their hearts the ideal of a mother's love; but for the latter even this is torn to rags, and with it one of the anchors of life is lost. Many mothers use their children to satisfy their personal vanity. From this motive they rig them out like monkeys and flaunt around with them; they teach them speeches like parrots, so as to be able to boast of them and occupy attention with them, and that they can tell themselves that they have been doing their children some good. It is not the ennobling of the childish heart that is the motive of such mothers' action, but the satisfaction of their own petty vanity.

I have already said that with children of high mental gifts and with precociously developed power of apprehension the influence of youthful impressions, as well as their whole education, is of uncommon importance for their after-life. Let us cast a glance upon the youth and education of some super-eminent men.

Of Goethe it is said:

"Seldom has a boy exhibited such completeness of human faculties. The multiplied activity of his life is prefigured in the varied tendencies of his childhood. We see him as an orderly, somewhat formal, inquisitive, reasoning, deliberative child, a precocious learner, an omnivorous reader, and a vigorous logician who thinks for himself—so independent that at six years of age he doubts the beneficence of the

Creator, at seven doubts the competence and justice of the world's judgment. He is inventive, poetical, proud, loving, volatile, with a mind open to all influences, swayed by every gust, and yet, while thus swayed as to the direction of his activity, master over himself."* One sees from this short picture what enormous influence education and the impressions of childhood must have had upon his after-life. His mind was "open to all influences, swayed by every gust." The careful education which young Goethe received aided in no small degree in the unfolding of his mighty genius. His father conducted the education with strictness and conscientiousness, and the scientific instruction was systematically arranged.

His excellent mother knew how to mould her child's tender heart in its early childhood, how to bring his fancy into exercise, and how to impress him with a sense of the noble and the beautiful. Her relations with her children are truly touching. She herself reports how she told stories every evening to little Wolfgang and his sister Cornelia: "I could not be tired of telling them as long as he was not tired of listening. I represented Fire, Water, Earth, and Air as beautiful princesses, and gave a meaning to all that goes on in Nature. I believed in it myself more implicitly than my listeners did; and when we pretended there were roads between the stars, and that we should some time live in stars, and thought what great spirits we should meet up there, nobody was ever more eager than I for the hour of story telling with the children, nor more vexed when some invitation I had received prevented it. There sat I, and there was he devouring me with his great black eyes; and if the fate of any favourite did not go right according to his sense, I could see how the angry vein would swell in his forehead and how he would choke down his tears. Many a time he would in-

* G. H. Lewes. The Life and Works of Goethe, 1855, Book I, chap. v.

terfere before I could bring about the turn of affairs, and would say, 'I hope, mother, that the princess will not marry the accursed tailor even if he did slay the giant?' Then if I made a halt and put off the catastrophe to the next evening, I could be sure that he would repeat everything aright up to that point, and where my imagination fell short it would often be patched out by his. Then, if I took up the threads of fate on the next evening and turned them according to his plan and said, 'You guessed it! that is what happened!' he would be all fire and flame, and his little heart could be seen to beat under his ruffle. He was his grandmother's pet, and to her he would confide all his ideas of how the story would go; and from her I would learn how it must run to conform to his wishes; and in this way there was a secret diplomatic transaction between us which neither of us betrayed to the other. So I had the satisfaction of continuing my tales to the delight and astonishment of my auditor, who, without recognising that he was the author of all my marvellous occurrences, saw with glowing eyes events fall out according to his keenly desired plans, and greeted the finishing of it with enthusiastic applause." What unspeakable thanks Goethe owed this mother, who so completely gave herself up to the care and love of her children!

Schiller, according to the accounts of his biographers, had in his youth no extraordinary mental qualities, though his capacity was good and his diligence intense. "The boy," we read, "felt that without diligence no mastery can be won." His education, which his strict father most conscientiously superintended, was exceedingly solid and thorough. His extremely rich-hearted—or, as the Germans say, *gemüthvolle*—mother surrounded him with an atmosphere of love. She had plainly a great share in his education. Scharffenstein, a youthful friend of Schiller, says of her: "Her son was the image of her in figure and physiognomy. Her dear face was very feminine and mild. Never was there seen

a more admirable, domestic, and feminine woman." Körner, in his biography, says of Schiller: "In many respects he was a backward child, and certainly was not one of those who gratify the vanity of their parents by precocious acquirements and talents. But even in his childhood his soft heart, combined with a firm will, his good faith, and his attachment to those who had won his love, together with his easily roused fancy, were plainly discernible." His remarkably intelligent father and his warm-hearted mother supplied him with a superior education. "He had from childhood a ruling bent for poetry; but his father considered his own duty to be merely to tolerate his son's first essays, not to encourage them. He had too lofty an ideal of art to permit himself, in a case so near to him, not to exercise due care lest a mere inclination should be mistaken for an avocation."

Raphael, though he lost his mother in his eighth and his father in his eleventh year, received a good education and rounded development. Galileo, Newton, Linnæus, Fénelon, Arago, early showed acute understanding, and all were liberally educated. Haydn, though born in narrow circumstances, received an exceptional and loving education. He expressed his gratitude for it in later years, and was most strongly attached to his mother, who had always most tenderly cared for his well-being. Liszt was brought up with the utmost love and care. His father early recognised his genius, and once exclaimed: "You are elect of destiny, and will realize that ideal of art which cast a vain glamour over my youth. In you I wish to rejuvenate and propagate my soul." Franz was a weakly child in body and was in need of a good deal of parental concern, and it was prodigally bestowed. His father kept a diary devoted to him "with the minute and anxious punctiliousness of a tender father." Washington's father, dying when George was eleven years old, had such confidence in the highly intelligent and prudent mother, that he

gave her, by his will, full control of all the property of the children until they should come of age. This lady fulfilled every duty of a mother with the utmost love and tenderest concern, and gave them an excellent education. Kant said: "I shall never forget my mother, for she planted and tended the first germs of good in me. She opened my heart to the impressions of Nature. She awakened and expanded my ideas; and her teachings have had an enduring and wholesome influence upon my life."

Heine had an admirable mother, whose only endeavour it was to transmit to her children the excellent education that she had herself received in her father's house. Her favourite authors were Goethe and Rousseau. The reading of Émile had made education rather a hobby of hers. She herself taught the boys to read and write, and most carefully superintended their instruction. "To her," we read in a biography of Heine, "he clung with an affecting child-love. He sang her praises in charming poems, and referred to her continually in his writings with the sincerest piety."

A genius of whom Heine says that "he was one of the greatest German poets, and among all our dramatists nearest approached Shakespeare," was ruined by vice and debauchery. This was Dietrich Grabbe, whose father was director of a house of correction and of a pawn shop. He suffered the gloomiest impressions in his childhood, and these were increased by his neglected and perverse education. A biographer of the poet accuses his mother of having led him to drink, but Heine defends the woman from this charge, saying that it is false. Still, even Heine, in his attempt to rehabilitate the honour of the mother of his colleague, says: "She was a rough dame, the wife of a turnkey, and in caressing her wolf cub, Dietrich, she perhaps sometimes scratched him a bit with the claws of a she-wolf." What might a genius like Grabbe not have become

if his education had been conducted by a mother like Goethe's?

A multiform genius, equally gifted in poetry, music, and painting, was E. T. A. Hoffmann. His parents separated after a short and unhappy marriage, and his mother, who with her children was invited to her mother's, was prevented by bad health from concerning herself with their education. It was left to the grandmother and an uncle, and was so conducted as to exercise in many respects a decidedly unhappy influence upon the formation of the boy's character. It dealt with all that regards the formation of the intellect and the information of the memory. He received superior instruction in the sciences and the arts. But the mother's influence was wanting. The formation of the character and of the heart was neglected. The pedantic peculiarities of the uncle served as motive to the boy's satiric pencil and leaning toward the bizarre. To the remonstrances which his friend Hippel addressed to him concerning his disrespectful deportment to his relatives he replied: "What luck have I had with my relatives? If I had had people like you for my father and my uncle I would not behave so." In spite of his genius, his works show a craziness for which his perverse education is sufficient to account. At last he gave himself over to drink, and that not from need or anxiety, with which he had certainly been acquainted, but just at the time when fortune smiled upon him and he had been absolved from all sordid cares.

Schopenhauer had a mother mentally gifted indeed, but cold. In his early youth an antagonism arose between mother and son. When he showed her his first work—The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason—she ironically remarked: "A book for apothecaries, is it not?" She was herself an authoress, and he replied: "My books will live after yours have long been relegated to the lumber room." She retorted: "Your books will never go to the

lumber room, because nobody will buy them at all." This want of motherly love may well have had more than a slight influence upon the character and later life of the philosopher. Much in his life might have shaped itself otherwise if he had been able to look back upon a youth beautified by a mother's love. Perhaps the repellent coldness of his mother laid the foundation for his subsequent disparagement of women.

Rousseau's mother died at his birth. His father was a poor watchmaker who could not concern himself much about the education of his son. When the father had to flee on account of an affair of honour, the son went into a boarding-school, where he was treated hardly and unjustly. Later he was apprenticed to an engraver, and in that situation he read during his leisure all the books in a circulating library. Being ill-treated by his master, he left him, and at the age of fifteen wandered about Savoy until he was recommended by a Catholic priest to Madame de Warens. She was a very good-hearted but morally weak woman, who spoiled her *protégé* exceedingly, and soon converted him from an adopted son into a lover. Such youthful impressions must, it is plain, have had a very disadvantageous influence upon the character of Rousseau. Many an absurdity of his later life is to be attributed to his unfortunate youth. How far his bad education, or rather his total want of education, may have acted upon the later development of the derangement of his mind is a question not to be decided with certainty.

Byron's parents having separated, he was educated, or rather not educated, only by a mother of weak and over-emotional character and an old nurse. The consequence was that he developed a very unstable character, became addicted to wild excesses, later suffered from hallucinations; and, in short, his genius did not unfold itself at all as it otherwise would have done.

These few examples are not offered as an inductive argument to establish a connection between education and character, as if it were otherwise unknown to us, as Lombroso, for example, gives lists to show that men of genius are commonly undersized, etc. They are offered as illustrations which, when we know what that connection is in ordinary cases, may disabuse the mind of an unfounded notion that genius is an exception to the general rule, and which will help us to imagine what the early life of a genius is, and how he is *more* and not *less* influenced by education than another boy would be, agreeably to the deductive arguments we have already set forth.

The circumstance that there have been men of genius (not so numerous, perhaps, as is supposed) who, in spite of an education, either defective or positively baleful, have worked their way to fame and public usefulness, does not in the slightest degree conflict with our proposition, for we can never know what degree of perfection they might have attained with a better education. We do know that some of those who ultimately impressed themselves upon the minds of their own age and upon those which succeeded it, had been at one time in danger of turning out nonentities in consequence of early influences, and were only awakened by some fortunate chance ; and, finally, in anthropological questions we must not expect to find rules without any exceptions whatever.

Beethoven developed the greatest musical genius, although his youth was not cheerful and his education was very faulty. His father, himself a musician, took care to form his son in music in a thorough manner, especially as the son's genius was recognisable in his childhood ; but the moral impressions which he received as a boy were not calculated to influence happily a young heart or a character in process of formation. The father was given to drink ; and Ludwig's young friend, Stephan von Brenning, once

saw the drunken father rescued from the police by the son in the open street. Certainly, such things could not fail to make their mark upon the still plastic character. Nohl says, "The reticence and a certain defiant spirit of his youth and manhood must be referred to such harsh experiences."

Disadvantageous as a bad education may, even under ordinary circumstances, be expected to be to a genius, both with respect to his character and to his intellect, it will be still more fatal in case he has a strongly marked fancy with but moderate gifts in other directions. Children in whom inordinate fancy or feelings somewhat overbalance their other faculties may, nevertheless, by the aid of an energetic education, with continued training of their memory, attention, will, etc., be made productive and capable men, while without a rational education they would fall into the category of pseudo-geniuses or fools of genius.

Thus we see the enormous importance of education—not merely school instruction, but the impressions of the family circle upon the child and the youth. Especially momentous for the child's later destiny is the mother's part in education. Every innovation in our social habits tending to diminish the mother's large share in the education of her children ought to be considered as prejudicial to the progress of humanity. Public schools answer well enough to teach children arithmetic and geography, but no institution can for one moment be thought of as a substitute for the bringing up by a whole-hearted mother. It is the natural vocation of the woman; and every wife who, from motives of ease, pleasure, or vanity, tries to shirk that duty, has, by an unnatural civilization, been brought to a lower moral level than her cat or her slut, either of which, by instinct, surrenders itself ungrudgingly to its maternal duties. Oh, mothers, take these things to heart! Learn to recognise that no higher or nobler task is presented to a human being than the self-forgetting and love-abounding education of one's

own children. Nature herself sanctifies this duty, and upon its performance the destiny of the race depends.

Before I leave this subject, let me animadvert to a phenomenon interesting in many respects—that of the precocious child. What is a precocious child? As I have already mentioned, the majority of great geniuses have shown in their childhood great mental capacities, which, according to their inborn dispositions, were specially developed in one direction or another. A child whose capacity in a special branch is so high that it is able to perform things which "astound the multitude" is generally called an "infant phenomenon" or precocious child. It is an established fact of experience that, with very few exceptions, precocious children are found exclusively in the branch of practical music. This fact is not so much due to the earlier development of musical genius, for Raphael, Michel Angelo, and Thorwaldsen equally showed in their early childhood a very uncommonly great gift for their art. But were they able "to astound the multitude"? The performance of a precocious child can only astound when the multitude is able to compare the fine result with the youth of the performer. A child, be it never so gifted, is not at the apogee of its ability; but allowances are made for its years. The performance—unless, indeed, it be a very incomplex result, like the answer to an arithmetical problem, or a feat of memory—is in itself hardly to be called extraordinary even in the most phenomenal cases. But it is the circumstance that it is done by a child that makes it wonderful. The work of the child-poet or child-artist, whatever its genius, when abstracted from its authorship, will not amaze the multitude as a musical performance will do. The poem or picture endures, and thus can be subjected to criticism irrespective of the personality of the artist, whether the author be boy or man. It is different with musical execution. In the concert-hall the personality

of the male or female artist exercises upon the public no inconsiderable influence of that kind which is generally designate by the term *suggestion*.

As I have already said, the artistic performance of a child is, in itself considered, always slighter than that of an accomplished artist. But to see a little seven-year-old boy seat himself at a piano before a vast or distinguished audience and play it with his little hands, that is what, as a natural phenomenon, not as a work of pure art, astounds the multitude.

Opinions may differ as to whether art institutions and associations ought to confine themselves strictly to striving after the highest pure art, in the faith that thereby the sentiment and heart of the nation may be ennobled, or whether they may admit, as a secondary purpose, the bringing before the public of anthropological curiosities. For my part, the circus rather than the concert-hall seems to me their proper place. Kant says: "A precocious genius of ephemeral existence, like Heinecke in Lübeck and Baratier in Halle, are departures of Nature from her rule, curiosities for a naturalist's cabinet. They cause astonishment on account of their early age; but they often disappoint those who bring them forward." Let everybody choose for himself what class of entertainments he prefers, and to that end I would send the curiosities to the curiosity shops.

But there is a rather more serious, not to say solemn, side to the public exhibition of precocities; and the psychiatrist would neglect a duty if he failed to refer to it. Remembering what the importance of education and childish impressions has been seen to be, let anybody picture to himself what the life of an "infant phenomenon" is, and what are the impressions that are made upon it. A wise education, in such a case, would primarily be directed to avoiding the evil consequences of vanity and of a

deadening self-consciousness. But this poor victim of the crowd and of money-getting is covered every night with medals and decorations from shoulders to waist, and is exposed to the stupendous plaudits of a brilliant assemblage. His childish heart needs forming; all that is noxious should be screened from his imagination; but instead of that, newspaper puffs and the nauseously indiscriminate praise of society blunt his feeling and nip his nobler sentiments in the bud. The consequence of this—bad education, as I was about to call it, but that is not the word for it—this wicked ill-treatment, is the destruction of the genius of almost every such child. They are not taught that not even genius can climb the rugged steeps of Parnassus without diligence and labour. They are told that they are perfect, and that their performances are above criticism. But when, at last, they have to appear, no longer in the child's stockings and black velvet frock, but in the man's dress-coat, that nimbus round the phenomenon melts away; and then it is perceived that the development of their genius has undergone mischievous perturbations. The character is unformed; the mental balance all out; and, in short, the wonderful child is, after all, nothing but a fool. No empty theory is this, but manifold experience. Such fools, who in their childhood were driven about the world to the sound of drum and trumpet, are numerous. It is high time that judicious men should protest against the unspeakable outrage which vain and mercenary parents and unscrupulous impressarios, who look upon a child of genius as nothing but an article of trade, commit upon these precocities.

The defenders of this abuse tell us that Mozart, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn were all infant prodigies. But what of that? If a physician recommends that our children should eat wholesome food and breathe good air, will you retort, "Pshaw! I know of several children that ate the

most unwholesome things, were exposed to all sorts of bad influence, and yet they grew up all right and are marvels of rugged health; so you see it makes no difference how children are brought up?" Besides, Mozart and Mendelssohn were not treated like the youthful prodigies of to-day. I have already mentioned what an intelligent father Mozart had, and how, in spite of his son's public appearance, in accordance with the morals of those days, he gave him a superior education. Mendelssohn's teacher, old Zelter, always had it at heart to preserve his scholar's childlike modesty and to guard him against self-conceit. And then, how much, after all, did these children play in public compared with the professional tours of the precocious child of to-day? Yet, notwithstanding the comparative infrequency of the performances, those art journeys certainly had no happy influence either upon Mozart or upon Beethoven. Mozart lived all his life in a highly wrought state of the nerves, and died at the meridian of life with a fatally diseased brain. The sad influence of the dreary youth of Beethoven upon the development of his character has already been noticed.

We hear it said that precocious children in poor circumstances have no other way of getting the money requisite for a rational education than by such concert tours. Were this assertion verified, it would be time that such a shocking state of things were put to an end. In the "land of the Almighty Dollar," as it is called, besides a "Society for the Protection of Animals" there is a "Society for the Protection of Children," invested with certain powers by law; and not long ago, when a precocious child had been sent over from Germany to win dollars, the doors of the hall were closed by the authority of that society, and, much to the disgust of the Herr Impressario, whose business was damaged, public performances were prohibited. The wonderful child was sent home by a philanthropist, and with

the child was sent a considerable sum of money, this being intrusted to the father, under the condition that the child should be provided with a thorough education and should not appear in public until he was grown up. It is to be hoped that the time is now not far distant when the destruction of a genius for the sake of material interests shall belong to the barbarities overthrown by civilization.

SECULAR HYSTERIA.

HITHERTO mental states of individuals have been our chief study in this book. But collective phenomena of mental disturbance are likewise met with at several distinct periods of history. The influence which the insane have exerted upon different branches of human production and upon the general development of humanity has been already pointed out. We have particularly referred to the influence of individuals, such as weak-minded benefactors of the people, mad prophets, and the imbecile Roman emperors who displayed what is called moral insanity. But besides such individual phenomena there is a form of mental disease the peculiarity of which is that it attacks not isolated individuals, but epidemically entire communities, and in that way influences the development and metaphysical conceptions (*Weltanschauung*) of whole nations.

A correct recognition of such states will be of no slight value for the community; for along with the recognition comes, as we shall see, an indication of the way to improvement and remedy. Thus it becomes the task of modern psychiatry not only to treat individual patients, but also to observe society, and especially to keep guard against that phenomenon which ought to be termed Secular Hysteria (*Zeithysterie*).

It is a pretty widespread opinion that nervous diseases, and especially hysteria, have alarmingly increased during the last decades, and that they are about to increase much more. In all civilized countries, we are told, and in every stratum of the population, a weakness of the nervous system

manifests itself of which our forefathers had no knowledge. Neurasthenia and hysteria spread wider and wider, like a devastating epidemic, attacking not merely the lower classes but just the "upper ten thousand." It is educated society which is threatened with total overthrow by utter derangement of the nerves. "Whither is this to lead, and how is it to end?" lament some solicitous prophets who already see yawning before them the gulf by which the enervated human race is about to be swallowed up.

Let us weigh the reasons which occasion this apprehension. What real proof is there of this enormous increase of nervous diseases and of the continually progressive degeneration of civilized man? First of all, there are the statistics. "Numbers," we have been told, "can not lie." Perhaps not; but those who collect them may fasten upon them very seriously mistaken labels.

The assiduous statistician ascertains that the insane asylums contain more women than men. So far, so good. But if he tells us that more women are insane than men, he labels those numbers erroneously, for the inequality is really due to the fact that insane males die off, while insane females survive, relatively speaking. Suppose the statistics of different countries do show that the number of inmates of insane asylums is increasing out of all proportion to the growth of the general population, would it not be superficial in the extreme to conclude, without further data, that insanity was upon the increase? At present these statistics mean nothing more than that the number of patients in such institutions has considerably increased. But when we consider what great advances have been made in the diagnosis of mental diseases, and consider also that a great number of such cases, which were formerly treated unsuccessfully at home, are now treated in such institutions with good results, because there they are removed from the detrimental influences of familiar surroundings, while the proper means and

methods for rational treatment are at hand, we shall find that the seemingly enormous increase of mental disturbances need not cause us uneasiness.

Other extensive statistical material for nervous diseases is afforded by the numerous dispensaries of the great cities; but no extended experience is required to teach that a large proportion of such cases would not appear if the patients had to pay fixed fees, and round ones, as they had to do in the good old times when physicians saw comparatively little of nervous diseases. Our grandmothers had their "headaches" and their "twitchings in the limbs" like the women of to-day; but they never dreamed of calling a doctor or going to the dispensary for such things, so that they were not "statistical material."

In the dispensaries for nervous diseases there are numerous chronical patients who, becoming discouraged in one place, think they would like to try another doctor; and some of them make a round of sojourns in different hospitals. Each of them is counted as many times over in the statistics as there are places where he is treated. This perceptibly increases the numbers.

These considerations give some idea, though but a slight one, of the extreme difficulty of making even rough approximate inferences from sanitary statistics.

But certain observers tell us that exact enumeration is not required. Hysteria and degeneration of the race stare us, as they aver, daily in the face. In every department of human activity disorders of the nervous system are seen. The very style and methods of the art and literature of the day proclaim a general nervous prostration.

Max Nordau is the protagonist of this widespread opinion. In his eyes, mental degeneration has seized upon the majority of civilized men to such a degree that "the upper strata of urban population" form but a "suffering hospital." The art, the poetry, the fiction, the philosophy of the day

present the most manifold embodiments of degeneration and of secular hysteria.

Nordau admits, of course, that degeneration and hysteria have always existed. "But," says he, "they formerly showed themselves sporadically, and had no importance in the life of the whole community. It was only the vast fatigue which was experienced by the generation on which the multitude of discoveries and innovations burst abruptly, imposing upon it organic exigencies greatly surpassing its strength, which created favourable conditions under which these maladies could gain ground enormously and become a danger to civilization."* The conception of secular hysteria which advances epidemically and attacks whole classes is therefore, according to Nordau, only applicable to the present time; and of this he says: "We stand now in the midst of a severe mental epidemic; of a sort of black death of degeneration and hysteria."†

But in declaring that in former times hysteria was but of sporadic occurrence and attained no importance for the life of society as a whole, Nordau falls into a grave error. Mental diseases, and especially hysteria, have, from the earliest times to the present, exercised a tremendous influence upon the current *Weltanschauung* or metaphysical conception of the universe and upon the whole mental development, and that precisely because they not only occurred sporadically, but, as we shall soon see, attacked the masses in the form of epidemics, and so became of the highest significance and importance for the life of society as a whole.

Religious enthusiasm and proneness to the mystic and the occult formed, even in the highest antiquity, an important factor of those degenerate and hysterical individuals who entertained the delusion that they were in communication with good or with bad spirits, and who by that

* Degeneration, p. 537. † *Ibid.*

channel influenced the masses not a little. A great number of the priestesses who delivered oracular responses to the Greeks "with strong quakings of their body" were psychopathic subjects undergoing the hysterical convulsions well known to us to-day. Hence epilepsy, which in those days was not discriminated from hysterical cramps, came to be called the *morbus sacer*, or sacred disease. Plutarch, in his description of the Pythian priestess, delineates the typical image of a hysterical subject who, in ecstatic convulsion, stammered unintelligible words, into which the priests injected some sense. But hysteria, with its inclination to religious enthusiasm, was not limited to separate persons. On the contrary, we meet with it among all peoples and in all periods of history; and among all peoples we meet with it in the form of epidemics of various kinds. But never did this disease find a better or more fertile soil in which to thrive than in the Middle Ages of northern Europe, marked as they were by ignorance and superstition; and, accordingly, we find that epidemics of hysteria then assumed dimensions surpassing those of any similar outbursts in other centuries. A great many fine books have been written about the individual and epidemic crazes of those ages. The French have made particularly careful researches into the matter. Let it suffice here to adduce a few examples in order to show how great an influence hysteria, in its collective manifestation, exercised upon the social relations and entire development of civilization of those times.

Calmeil* describes a great number of hysterical epidemics of different forms. One of the principal eruptions in Germany was demonomania, or *Teufelswahn*. "In the year 1549," says Calmeil, "a delusion called *Vaudoisie* prevailed in Artois, that the devils carried many secretly in

* Calmeil. Der Wahnsinn in den vier letzten Jahrhunderten. Nach dem Französischen bearbeitet von Leubusch.

the night to the assemblies, where compacts were made with Satan and where carnal intercourse took place. Without knowing how, the participants of the nocturnal meetings found themselves next morning back in their dwellings. At the place of assemblage is a devil of human form whose face, however, is seen by none. He reads his commands to them, and then every one has to offer an indecent salute; and he gives them money, wine and food in great quantities. Thereupon each takes a woman—for there are women and men together there—the light is extinguished, and they carnally converse. Suddenly every one is back at the place whence he came. On account of this delusion many persons of Arras, both gentle and simple, were imprisoned and stretched on the rack."*

A manifestation equally widespread in Germany was anthropophagy—that is, the delusion that the Devil and his worshippers lived on human flesh. Men were believed to live in the neighbourhood of Berne and of Lausanne who had given themselves to the Devil and who ate their own children. Hundreds of men were for this stretched on the rack or burned at the stake. Indeed, there were a number of insane persons who thought that they themselves were in league with the Devil, and that they slew children. A woman who was executed at Berne testified: "We lie in wait especially for unbaptized children, but also for those who are baptized, particularly when they are not protected by the sign of the cross. We kill them by our words and ceremonies as they lie in their cradles or by their parents' sides. So people suppose they have been stifled or have just died of themselves. Then we secretly steal them out of the earth and boil them until, after separating the bones, the whole meat becomes fluid and potable. Of the more

* Calmeil, *op. cit.*, p. 30. He cites Annales Flandicorum, ed. Jacob Meyer, lib. xvi; Monstrelet, Chroniques, book ii; Del Rio, Disquisitiones magicarum, etc., p. 821; J. Wier, Opera Omnia, p. 205.

solid parts we make a magic salve for our arts and transformations. We bottle the juice, and when a neophyte drinks a few drops of it he has a share in our science."*

The bull of Innocent VIII, which appeared in 1484, showed how deep-rooted the devil-delusion was in Germany. Everywhere people talked of how there was a great league with devils whose votaries committed deeds of shame in their assemblies; of how they were under obligation to destroy and consume newborn babes before they were baptized. In one year after the publication of the bull, forty-one women were executed in Burbia because in their nocturnal assemblies they always strangled, boiled, and ate a child. Midwives were on the Rhine feared more than ordinary witches. Since their calling brought them daily into connection with newborn babes, it must plainly be of the utmost consequence to the Devil to win them over to his service. A midwife who was burned alive at Dann, near Basel, accused herself of having killed more than forty children.† Bodin adds that she afterward by night disinterred the bodies and ate of them, baking the meat in a stove.‡ Among the persons who were burned in Strassburg, one woman was distinguished by her insensibility to the most terrible tortures. She declared that this freedom from pain was due to her being embrocated with the fat of a newborn child.* This sort of delirium was very widely spread under Innocent III. "The inclination to worship the Devil appears in many families to be hereditary and in many localities to be endemic." The religious delusion was, as is commonly the case, connected with states of sexual excitement and delusions belonging thereto.

Toward the middle of the sixteenth century there broke out in many places in Germany, especially in convents, epi-

* Nider. In Malleo Maleficarum, vol. i, p. 719.
† Sprenger. In Malleo Maleficarum.
‡ Bodin. Démonomanie des sorciers.
* Calmeil, *op. cit.*

demic convulsions which exhibited the typical image of *la grande hysterie* and were connected with symptoms of religious delusions and of sexual excitement. Calmeil cites the following report upon the malady in one convent: "The majority of the nuns had at that time been living for more than fifty days exclusively upon turnip juice. Their sickness would begin by the vomiting of a black liquid so sharp and acrid that it would take the skin off their tongues and lips. Their nights soon became restless. They would suddenly walk in their sleep. They would think they heard a sound of human lamentation, and on hurrying to the spot would find nobody. When they had passed their urine, they immediately afterward wet the bed or their linen. They often had the sensation of being tickled on the soles of their feet, and could not keep from laughing. They were thrown out of bed and rolled on the floor, as if they had been pulled out by the feet. Their arms and legs were contorted in every direction, and their faces were convulsively drawn up. They would leap high and then fling themselves with all their force upon the floor again. Many bore bruises on their bodies. Often, when they seemed perfectly quiet and sane, they would suddenly fall down, lose the use of speech, and remain stretched on the ground as if they had completely lost consciousness. Then they would throw themselves out of their apparent immobility convulsively into the air with such violence and strength that those about could hardly hold them down. Many found it too hard to keep themselves erect, and crawled on their hands and knees. Others clambered up to the roof beams, and let themselves hang head down." *

Such cases of typical hysteria appeared everywhere in the form of epidemics, and with special frequency in convents. Of one convent we read: "It was singular that as

* Calmeil, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

soon as one nun had her fit, the others, even in distant parts of the building, would immediately go off into fits as soon as they heard the noise of a person falling. The nuns had no power of will at all; they bit themselves, struck and bit their mates, knocked against one another, and endeavoured vehemently to wound strangers. Upon any attempt to control the indecency of their conduct, their tumult and exaltation would become more angry. If they were left to themselves, they would soon come to biting and wounding without seeming to feel the least pain." Such subjects were considered to be bewitched or possessed of the Devil. They were treated by exorcisms and conjurations which often increased their sufferings.

Not women alone were attacked by the disease; men were visited in the same way. Gilles de la Tourette* gives an account of such an epidemic, according to a description by Hecker.† We read: "In Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1574, troops of men and women from Germany were seen labouring under a common madness and displaying in the streets and churches this singular spectacle. With clasped hands, and carried away by an inward compulsion which they could not master, they danced for hours and kept up the spectacle without being abashed by those who were about, until they would fall exhausted to the ground. Then they would complain of their great agony, and would groan as though they were going to die, until people wrapped their abdomens with linen cloths, whereupon they would come to themselves and be free for a time from their sufferings. The object of this was to dispel the wind which set in after the attack. People often resorted to the simpler method of planting blows of the fist or kicks upon their abdomens. During their dance the subjects had visions. They did not see or hear; but in

* Gilles de la Tourette. Die Hysterie nach den Lehren der Salpétrière. Deutsch von Karl Grube.

† Annalen für Hygiene und gerichtliche Medicin, 1834, vol. xii.

their imagination they beheld spirits whose names they pronounced, or rather shrieked out. . . . In well-developed cases the fits began with epileptiform convulsions. The subjects fell snorting to the ground without consciousness, and foamed at the mouth. Then, all at once, they got up and began their dance with frightful wrenchings. In a few months this plague extended from Aix-la-Chapelle as far as the Netherlands."

Like the men and women, children were likewise attacked. Calmeil adduces the following example: "Toward the end of the winter of 1566 the majority of the foundlings in the hospital of Amsterdam were seized with convulsions and delirium. Thirty children (other accounts say seventy) suffered from the malady. They tumbled suddenly to the ground, rolled from half an hour to an hour upon the floor, as if possessed, and when they then stood up they awoke as from a deep sleep. They did not know what had happened. Prayers, conjurations, and exorcisms of such power that they would certainly have driven out the Devil were of no avail. After a longer duration of the disease the children finally began to vomit. They threw up nails, needles, wool, pieces of linen, bits of skin, and other foreign bodies which they had secretly swallowed down. They climbed like cats upon the walls and roofs, spoke in unknown tongues, and had such a terrific look that it scared people. This was more than sufficient for regarding them as possessed. At the sight of many women they made peculiar gestures, and such women were regarded as witches." *

A phenomenon often seen to-day in insane asylums is, that patients think themselves to be beasts, such as dogs, cats, monkeys, wolves, etc., and behave accordingly. In the Middle Ages this gave rise to the superstition of the Werewolf. The word is formed from *wolf* and the obsolete word

* Calmeil, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

wër, in Gothic *vair*, in Latin *vir*, man. Such persons, who during epidemics were sometimes found in great numbers, ran about the woods on all fours, lived and behaved exactly like beasts, fell upon men who might pass by, attacked even riders and vehicles, and stole children and devoured their flesh. Such things were known to the ancients too. The Scythians, according to Herodotus, knew the werewolf; the Greeks, especially the Arcadians, spoke of a λυκάνθρωπος; and the Romans of the *versipellis*. Toward the end of the year 1573 the peasants in the vicinity of Dôles were authorized to hunt werewolves. The parliamentary license ran thus: "In the territories of Espagny, Salvange, Courchapon and surrounding places, it is known that for some days a werewolf has been seen. It has secretly stolen and killed several children, and has also attacked riders who have escaped it with difficulty. In consideration of all these things, this court of justice, wishing to avoid greater damage, allows the inmates and inhabitants of the said places and others, contrary to the edict concerning hunting, to come together with spears, halberds, pikes, crossbows, and sticks to hunt and pursue the said werewolf in all places where they can find him, and to bind him and to kill him without punishment or revenge. . . . Given in the council of the said court of justice this 13th day of September, in the year of grace 1573."* A man captured as a werewolf confessed that he was changed into a beast, and asserted that his skin grew inside out so that the fur was not seen. They cut off his arms and legs, to make sure he spoke the truth, and he bled to death.

The disease of demonomania continued to spread. According to one report, a thousand dancers filled the streets of Metz. Young people of both sexes fled from their parents, and servants from their masters, and allowed them-

* Calmeil, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

selves to be carried away by the epidemic, and to take part in the insane proceedings.*

In the electoral see of Trèves, within a few years, six thousand five hundred men were executed as enchanted and as bewitched.

"In 1609 the Government was informed that all Labourd, the district approximately coinciding with the present Département des Basses-Pyrénées swarmed with devil-worshippers. Seven-and-twenty parishes were attacked by the malady. The difficulty was greatest in Siboure, St. Jean de Luz, Andage, and the neighbourhood of Bayonne. The account of this epidemic is a shining contribution to the history of insanity as a social disease."† All these sufferers were considered as bewitched and possessed. The ministers of Henry IV held it to be imperatively requisite to bring the whole power of justice against witches; and hundreds of human beings were burned or incarcerated. The judges worked the rack actively in order to get complete confessions from the bewitched and from those who were sold to the Devil. Often the victims fell into ecstatic convulsion, and boasted, when they were tortured nigh unto death, that they felt inexpressible joy at finding themselves brought near to the Devil, who doubtless stood in their minds for the great adversary of the court. Many made vain efforts to utter a word when they were virtually throttled. A report says: "The Devil sought to vex them so that, even if they wished to confess, they should be unable to bring out a word. We saw with our own eyes that, as soon as they had spoken one word of confession, the Devil sprang at their throat, and that a hindrance mounted from their chest to their chin, just as when a plug is put before the opening of a cask in order to hinder the flow

* Cf. Richer. Études cliniques sur l'Hystéro-épilepsie ou grande hystérie.
† Calmeil, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

of the liquor." This describes a common symptom of hysteria which we call *globus hystericus*.

The influence which hysterical subjects exercised upon the whole metaphysics, or view of the universe (*Weltanschauung*) of those times, was tremendous. While superstition and fanaticism may truly be called the best fertilizers to yield a crop of hysteria—and they have vastly contributed to its extension and large growth—at the same time, hysteria, in its turn, with its astonishing symptoms, far beyond the classificatory powers of those ages, has had the effect of enormously feeding and propagating superstition. In short, the two phenomena, hysteria and superstition, played into one another's hands; each was alternately cause and effect; and between them they called forth that dismal period in which the human mind was loaded with fetters, and postponed for centuries its free possession of its heritage. The author who is capable of saying that before this our time "hysteria only showed itself sporadically, and had no importance in the life of the whole community," is not acquainted with the history of insanity and the biography of the human race. In order to pass judgment upon the present times from a psychological point of view, the very first requisite is an acquaintance with times gone by, and a tracing out of the path which has brought our culture to its present height.

Before passing on to the study of the present, let us first ask why and how it was that diseases of the mind took on an epidemic character. Most of those authors who have made hysteria the subject of deep investigations agree in this: that *suggestibility* (using this word approximately in its psychological sense) is a particular mark of the state of soul of the hysterical.* Every man is to a certain degree susceptible of *suggestion*. Every-day life shows this. Merely see-

* The reader is especially referred to G. Guinon's article on Les agents provocateurs de l'hystérie. Le Progrès Médical, Paris, 1889.

ing somebody else laugh, gape, hawk, or cough, makes other people do so; and so it is with other semi-voluntary acts. Hence it is that people are accustomed to say that laughing and gaping are "contagious." In hysteria, *suggestibility* is present in greater or less measure, according to the intensity of the disease. The subjects usually possess little or no force of will, but are receptive of outward influences. This characteristic becomes particularly apparent during emotions, such as anxiety, fear, terror, etc. An infinity of examples shows that grave states of hysteria are brought on by passionate emotion. Frequently it is a concatenation of such emotions that results at last in hysteria; whence the extreme importance of education, and of the collective impressions of childhood for persons of the sort considered, becomes apparent. As long as children drew in mystical tendencies with their mother's milk, and were kept in fear and terror by the belief in the apparition of the Devil and in witchcraft, it is self-evident that the doors for the development of hysteria were opened, and *suggestibility* and emotivity appeared in full blossom.

Unintermittent religious observances, imaginary converse with supernatural beings, such as saints and angels, led first to hallucinations and ultimately to morbid phenomena of hysteria. To look upon an ecstatical state, or upon a case of hysterical cramps, was sufficient to excite similar states in a circle of companions much disposed to the same thing by anxiety and surprise. Physicians who devote themselves specially to diseases of the nervous system and who enjoy a large practice know only too well that, when their anterooms are thronged, as often as one woman goes into a hysterical fit several others among those who happen to be there are pretty sure to follow the example. How much more strongly must the *suggestion* act if the individual who originates it is supposed not to be diseased, but, on the contrary, to have driven some astute bargain with Satan or to be

deep in the lore of the Chaldeans, so that the attack is regarded as an evidence of superiority!

Severe diseases of the mind proper, such as mania and paranoia, have undoubtedly also played their parts, and no unimportant ones, in the production of epidemics. All the phenomena of those diseases which are now speedily confined to asylums, continued in former ages before the public eye, and fell like sparks upon the magazine of superstition and mysticism in the people. Those who raved were supposed to be witches; and weak-minded persons who imagined themselves to be animals, etc., were taken for werewolves at least. As for those who were attacked by religious delusions of greatness, they were rated as holy souls endowed with the grace of God's Spirit. The influence of these subjects upon the mass of the hysterical, with their high-grade *suggestibility*, must, of course, have been a quite fatal one. Conditions which in the one were produced by insane ideas and imperative motions were called forth in the mass of the others by the force of *suggestion*, and were terribly spread.

The influence of these phenomena—that is to say, of insanity, but more particularly of endemic eruptions of hysteria, upon the whole culture—is shown in the literature of that time. Ideas of sorcery, of the apparition of the Devil, and of witchcraft prevailed not only among the rude populace, the mass of the people, but also among scholars of renown and consideration—men who had accomplished great things in their generation. Bulky tomes were devoted to the discussion of matters of witchcraft and possession. Pierre Delancre, a councillor of the Parliament of Bordeaux, wrote three large volumes on the subject; and his conclusion is, that to spare the life of a single person who is even suspected of sorcery * is a crime.

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* Delancre. Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons, Paris, 1613; P. Delancre. L'incrédulité et mécréance pleinement convaincue, etc., Paris, 1622.

With the gradual awakening of science and the beginning—or, more accurately speaking, the restoration—of the doctrine of mental diseases, the fatal consequences of superstition became milder, and the extension of hysterical epidemics was narrowed. To recognise that possession does not imply dealings with the enemy, but is simply a disease, was to break off the poisoned tip from the arrow of suggestion, and thenceforward the morbid impulse to imitation of the insane symptoms lost much of its strength and asserted itself less frequently.

No doubt hysterical epidemics based upon religion continue even to this day. The last century was by no means poor in such phenomena. They are to be met with still. The religious epidemics which broke out in Sweden in the years 1841 and 1842, and which have been described by the Swedish psychiatrist Sonden, are good examples.* To this very day, among certain religious denominations—the Methodist Church of the United States, for instance—phenomena can still be observed bearing a close resemblance to the mediæval epidemics. I myself had an opportunity of attending a Methodist camp-meeting, and was there enabled to assure myself of the overwhelming force *suggestion* may exert upon a crowd of thousands of people. Men and women, children and superannuated persons, behaved for all the world like mad. They howled and shrieked until they were too exhausted to bring forth a sound. Here and there one would leap up. He was "inspired," and would communicate to the crowd his divine inspirations, drawn in reality from hallucination or autosuggestion. I saw one young man climb a tree, imagining that he saw Christ in it.

The principal causes of the spread of epidemics of insanity and of the so-called secular hysteria are, then,

* Cf. P. Richer, *op. cit.*, p. 712.

suggestibility, emotionalism, the impulse to mimicry, and the tendency to mysticism. These important symptoms form the well-ripened dung heap for the growth of whatever mushroom crop of occult and supernatural ideas you will, whether from the spawn of superstition and fanaticism or from that of a lore that drolly mimics a true and living science. During the *Renaissance* of literature and art, which was followed by that of science, the religious fanaticism of the Middle Ages gradually lost its energy. The corresponding phenomena of our century may be called runners from that dismal period. But secular hysteria has by this time gradually assumed a different character. Belief in the devil and witches has faded quite away. Nowadays phenomena that seem unaccountable are produced in great variety by the hysteria which still subsists, and lead to crazy doctrines and errors, but they are new ones. Spiritualism, which flourished most in the middle part of the century, had such an origin. All those surprising phenomena that in earlier times had been referred to the agency of the devil and of witches were now treated as evidences of spiritual presence, telepathy, etc. Hysteria and religious superstition had formerly communicated each vitality to the other; now hysteria and pseudo-science intensified and propagated one another. The literature to which spiritualism has given rise is perfectly enormous, and forms a pendant to the old books on witchcraft. Scientific men of standing write in our times thick books to discuss the evidences of the most incredible theories about spirits, about veracious dreams, about prophecies, about telepathy, about clairvoyance, about premonitions, etc.

Such teachings could not fail to exert a decided influence upon the *suggestible* and mystically inclined mob of hysterics. The belief in ghosts continually spread, spiritualistic societies were formed everywhere. The social psychological situation was strongly analogous to that of the

Middle Ages in regard to witchcraft. The differences were chiefly extrinsic, although it must be confessed that they were not unimportant, for nobody was any longer burned at the stake or stretched on the rack.

The success of a spiritualistic sitting required that there should be among the company one strongly stamped morbid case, such as a person subject to cataleptic seizures or to hallucinations, or something of the sort. This person, who would have been considered a witch in the Middle Ages, was now termed a "medium," a middle term or *tertium quid*, through which the spirits of the dead could be brought into communication with the living. The mysterious darkness in which the sittings were held, the communion hymn that was softly intoned by the company, the excitement and strain with which the manifestations were expected, the medium's voice of awed assurance—these things, together with physiological conditions to which we need not refer, beclouded the brain and heightened the already high *suggestibility* of the hysterical circle. In this way appearances of ghosts of their lost ones were *suggested* to great numbers of persons. To the visions were joined auditory delusions. They heard the ghosts speak, and conversed with them; and with actual conversation all remnants of doubt of their living reality were swept away.

The psychological conditions were thus essentially the same as in the religious epidemics of the Middle Ages. There appearances of infernal spirits and of witches were *suggested;* here the ghosts of dead relatives were seen and heard. Hysteria, with its high *suggestibility*, accompanied by external circumstances adapted to excite it, acted as common cause in the two cases.

Transmission of delusions and hallucinations, or, so to say, "psychical contagion," is, in the experience of the practising psychiatrist, by no means a phenomenon of the extremest infrequency. In that form of mental derange-

ment which goes by the name of *folie à deux* two persons share the same hallucinations and deluded ideas. One of them is usually chronically insane, the other a degenerate, weak-minded, or hysterical person to whom deluded ideas and deceptions of sense are suggested by the former. I have myself had opportunities of observing a number of such cases. Among others, there was a man, chronically insane, who had erected a completely systematic structure of delusions. He was the deputy of God on earth. It was his duty to promulgate God's will and to better humanity. In consequence of his high mission, he had to endure many enmities and snares. He was persecuted (so he fancied) in every possible way. Attempts were even made (he thought) to put him out of the way. Moreover, his ideas of grandeur and persecution were nourished by corresponding deceptions of sense. Now, this patient had a wife. This wife regarded her husband as the delegate of God, believed every word he said, and was completely inoculated with his delusion. He *suggested* to her his hallucinations; so that she confirmed every assertion he made. She was a weak-minded person, who, under other outward circumstances, would most likely have exhibited no peculiarities out of the ordinary.

In company, and still more in large assemblies, the *suggestibility* of almost everybody is heightened.

Thus, then, morbid symptoms are propagated in any sort of crowded meeting, and since at spiritualistic reunions the above-mentioned outward conditions are particularly favourable to *suggestion*, it is not necessary that people should be downright weak-minded. It is only requisite that there should be among them a goodly sprinkling of *suggestible* persons of somewhat hysterical disposition; and when these are once attacked, the strength of *suggestion* that is brought to bear upon the remainder of the company will be multiplied.

It has been fully proved, and is generally admitted by spiritualists themselves, that from the beginning a great deal of trickery—partly mischievous, partly mercenary or otherwise deliberate—was mingled with the delusions. Besides, hysterical subjects are apt to be untruthful. At the same time mere jugglery would not have gone far if it had had nothing but cold understanding to work upon. Very often fraud was not present, and still oftener was superfluous. The real cause of the spiritualistic movement, broadly considered, was mental and nervous derangement.

Spiritualism has now, in the main, died out nearly as much as religious superstition and fanaticism have done. It is at present almost entirely in the hands of swindlers and their weak-minded victims.

With our present knowledge of hysteria, its causes and symptoms, men of science and all who are enlightened by its teachings are under a positive obligation, which can not be shaken off, and must not be shirked, to combat everything which tends to further superstition or to nourish the inclination of the people toward mysticism. Our duty it equally is to set our faces against those pernicious practices which are calculated to favour and augment that fatal symptom of hysteria, a heightened *suggestibility*. The very first of these practices is that of hypnotism. The hypnotic state is brought about by *suggestion* alone. It greatly increases the suggestibility of the subject. A number of the most eminent authors have become convinced that hypnotism is always a morbid state closely allied to hysteria. Charcot has asserted this most decidedly. His most eminent scholar, Gilles de la Tourette,* says: "We believe that with Cathelineau we have shown by irrefragable proofs that hysteria and hypnotism are two morbid affections

* Gilles de la Tourette, *op cit.*, p. 46.

which are closely allied, and, in particular, that hypnosis is only possible in persons who have a tendency toward hysteria, although this disease may not have as yet otherwise manifested itself. It is easily to be conceived, then, what an influence hypnotic experiments must have upon the calling forth of hysterical phenomena." Jolly,* too, comes to the conclusion that "habitual hypnotics do not differ essentially from hysterical subjects."

Although not all authors accept this conception of hypnotism, to which, for my part, I give in my full adhesion, yet all do agree that hypnotism in the hands of the laity, used as an amusement and a curiosity, may have the most unwholesome consequences. I know one case in my own experience in which such irresponsible fooling, kept up in spite of emphatic warnings, was followed by severe hysterical attacks. It is absolutely revolting that public exhibitions of professional hypnotizers are allowed to exercise their baleful influence unchecked. The subjects whom the hypnotizer selects from the audience are persons of high *suggestibility*, inclined to hysteria. The persons present are convinced of the real power of the hypnotizer, because the subjects are people with whom they are acquainted, who perhaps are members of their own family, so that all collusion and trickery are excluded. But fathers and mothers ought to reflect that it is a morbid state which is being induced in their daughters, that they are inoculated with a dangerous poison whose consequences may be destructive. The young ladies who are put into a cataleptic condition at the exhibition, who are made to eat raw potatoes for apples, and the like, are led to show off a mental weakness, and to be brought into a state of absolute idiocy to excite the hilarity of the audience. These are the persons who in

* F. Jolly. Ueber Hypnotismus und Geistesstörung. In the Archiv für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten, vol. xxv, Part III.

spiritualistic *séances* think they see ghosts of the departed, and who some centuries ago would have been joining in a wild dance in the street, or who would have committed actions leading to their execution, as persons possessed of the devil. Such exhibitions ought to be prohibited, as they are in France, for their pernicious influence is beyond question. As for the employment of hypnotism as a therapeutic agent, that is a question into which I do not here enter.

The above study of the causes and mode of origination of the so-called secular hysteria shows very clearly that this morbid phenomenon can be brought about under the most diverse outward conditions, and that, in fact, we meet with it in history in the most widely separate fields. The psychological conditions are, however, everywhere the same—suggestibility, excessive emotionalism, the impulse to mimicry, and the inclination to mysticism.

It is highly important to recognise public hysterias in good season, in order to work against the pernicious influence of morbid suggestions. It is therefore indubitably a service to the public to sound in time the warning voice, and thus protect humanity against great harm. Such a duty Nordau thinks that he fulfils when he tells us that we stand "in the midst of a severe mental epidemic, a sort of black death of degeneration and hysteria."

Whether diseases of the nerves, and particularly degeneration and hysteria, considered as sporadic cases, are at present more frequently to be observed than in earlier times can not be determined with certainty. Pertinent statistics are wanting; and, indeed, all but a small percentage of cases of hysteria and degeneration remain without medical treatment, and consequently escape all statistics. Some general remarks of Nordau—as, for example, that people nowadays grow gray and bald earlier than they used to do, and that we lose our power of optical accommodation earlier than our forefathers did—seem

to be assertions without one particle of proof. Now, without proof they can have no weight, unless we are to allow our own opinions to be formed by *suggestion.*

The chief arguments for Nordau's opinions are therefore drawn not from the observation of individuals, but from the social phenomena of the period, our mental civilization, in which he believes that he detects the grave malady of universal degeneration and hysteria. Criticisms, some judicious and some not so, of fashions, dress, furniture, and the mode of life of modern society, bring him to the conclusion that while "to the Philistine the current terms —caprice, eccentricity, affectation of novelty, imitation—afford a sufficient explanation" of the phenomena, yet to the physician, "especially to the specialist for diseases of the nerves and the mind," two definite states of disease are to be diagnosed: to wit, degeneration and hysteria. I must confess that I myself must, for that "specialist in diseases of the nerves and of the mind," Dr. Nordau, fall into the class of Philistines, inasmuch as I am unable to perceive that a "thin moustache" or "wild moustache," that very short hair or very long hair, afford sufficient grounds for a diagnosis of degeneration or of hysteria, or that the *coiffure* and dress of a modern lady, however eccentric and *outré*, constitute a morbid symptom, indicating a black death of degeneration. Nay, I must with shame confess that, far from finding fault with the fashions, it had appeared to me that the present dress of ladies bore, in many respects, the marks of sounder sense than the costumes of other epochs. I recall, for example, the hoop skirts of 1850, or those of the reign of Queen Anne, before "the age of degeneration and hysteria" had set in; the side puffs of 1850 extending laterally six inches right and left from the head, or the vast structures which were carried on the heads at an earlier period. Another point may be recollected: In former days—say in 1850, as a time perfectly remembered by

many—the iron rule of fashion was such that every kind of beauty was forced to decorate itself according to one strict model, while ladies now follow their own individual tastes and consult their own convenience much more. Again, that barbaric custom of wounding the female person in order to stick shiny trinkets into the apertures so effected is becoming rapidly extinct.

As for the habitations of modern society, or, in Nordau's phrase, the "stage properties and lumber-rooms, rag-shops and museums," where a "friar's cowl" or the "red mantle of Fra Diavolo" wraps the master of the house "like a Jackpudding"—these things, if such things there be, are shocking enough, I readily grant, to the feelings of an æsthetician. But, after all, I am unable to detect in them anything worse than coarse taste and coarse ostentation, qualities which surely have never ceased to mark the majority of the human race. These things are heirlooms from our monkey ancestors, not marks of recent degeneration. When Dr. Nordau declares that the "specialist physician for diseases of the nerves and of the mind" recognises degeneracy and hysteria "at first glance" in the passions and tastes of the "fashionable world," I do not believe that he speaks for any great proportion of the profession.

Whether or not there is such a thing as "correct" taste or "incorrect" taste is a question that has been endlessly disputed in spite of the sensible proverb, "De gustibus non est disputandum." If, however, a certain kind of taste is to be regarded as a symptom of insanity, it will plainly be necessary to agree first upon some standard of correct taste. Now, who shall be the arbiter in that matter? Shall it be the specialist for nervous diseases? If so, what a revolution will be imperative in our medical schools! Instead of students devoting their time to anatomy and pathology, they must be busy forming their tastes, attending lectures on ladies' dress, and, in short, must give themselves

over to things of that kind. Is it not to be feared lest after that sort of culture dealings with the insane should offend their supersensitive organizations? Yet however exclusive their devotion to æsthetics, differences of artistic opinion would still subsist among the "specialists in nervous diseases." Among them might still be found those who, instead of seeing a "plague of degeneration" in modern dress, would think it a happy release from the ideas of those good old times when, in the absence of secular hysteria, men wore embroidered coats and had their hands half covered with lace, and when a long-queued bagwig covered their heads.

In short, Nordau does not give a single plausible reason for treating modern customs and fashions as symptoms of advanced degeneracy and hysteria. Ever since women became women they have taken pleasure in the adornment of their persons. That feminine passion has existed at all times. Nordau does not tell us why, in modern women, it is to be taken as a sign of an epidemic disease peculiar to our age. The simple truth is, that he does not like the present fashions; and that is enough to make him accuse the rest of the civilized population of the globe of being degenerate and hysterical.

One of the most important symptoms of universal degeneration is, according to Nordau, incapacity for adaptation, powerlessness to accommodate one's self to the existing order of things. Here, as elsewhere, he goes too far, setting down anarchists and revolutionists as degenerates, without further examination. He speaks of a "silly need of being refractory" on the part of the degenerate, a "union against taking off one's hat to people." In this regard Nordau must consider his own doctrine as the most striking of all the signs of the times, in supporting its own contention, for he himself not only protests against pointed beards, partings of the hair, and cuts of the clothes, but declares the

whole population, with the possible exception of those who share his tastes, to be diseased in mind.

That is what driving the business of psychiatry in Nordau's wholesale style comes to. Whoever judges of a state of mind merely by comparison with his own sentiments and feelings, and treats every opinion which departs from his own as morbid, simply makes a layman's diagnosis; and such, in plain truth, is the psychiatric dilettantism of Nordau's whole book. No doubt Nordau finds in his "mentally decayed contemporaries" all the symptoms of degeneration which Morel, Magnan, and others have described. But his way of employing the conceptions of psychiatry marks his complete dilettantism. Every collector who, with a collector's passion, buys old bric-a-brac suffers, according to Nordau, from *oniomania*, or the mania for purchasing. Whoever occupies himself more with any matter than Dr. Nordau deems fitting has imperative ideas. Whoever writes what Dr. Nordau does not approve is a graphomaniac. Whoever composes a drama of love suffers from erotomania. Whoever opens the discussion of a problem concerning which Dr. Nordau has formed his opinion suffers from the mania for disputation or the mania for doubt. In this way it is easy in any given man to detect any given symptom of insanity.

The reader of Nordau is inclined to regard him as a humourist rather than as a strictly scientific man. But comical and, in part, diverting as his psychiatric performances are, even to the professional man, yet, after all, the matter has its serious side, especially since his book is addressed to the laity, among whom such dilettantism may have quite fatal consequences. We shall therefore be unable to leave it unnoticed, however little pleasure there may be in the discussion of such unprofessional opinions.

"The severe mental epidemic," "the black death of degeneration and hysteria," finds its principal embodiment,

according to Nordau's statement, in the art, poetry, and philosophy of the present time. It may here be objected that artists and poets form only a minute percentage of the community, and that it is impossible from them, and nothing more, to conclude anything in regard to the whole population, and to base on this such a smashing diagnosis. To that Nordau replies that the degeneration of our time shows itself in art and literature, and that the great secular hysteria is marked in the influence which a degenerate art can exercise upon the public. Modern art would correspond to the witch superstition of the Middle Ages which exercised its baleful influence upon the masses. It is admitted that the secular hysteria of the Middle Ages forms but a feeble pendant to our modern disease, for Nordau expressly assures us that in former times hysteria had no importance for the general life of society, while it now crushes down the whole human race. As for that art and literature which are, in Nordau's estimation, the embodiment of degeneracy, I shall consider them in the next chapter. We here concern ourselves only with their effect upon the masses—that is, with secular hysteria. Nordau takes as a sample a number of eminent poets and *littérateurs*, and, having reached the conviction that every one of them is a degenerate, he hangs some sort of *-ism* upon each and thinks that in this way he has produced a new form of disease, in comparison wherewith the demonomany and lycanthropy of the Dark Ages were innocent phenomena. For instance, Nordau specifies an Ibsenism, a Tolstoiism, and various other such *-isms*.

It would, at any rate, be exceedingly interesting if Dr. Nordau could furnish us with accurate analyses of these *-ism* diseases, and tell us in what they consist. But of this there is not one word. He just mentions the authors, labels each with his cheaply manufactured *-ism*, and thus the plague of the great secular hysteria receives its names. To judge by what Nordau tells us, Ibsenism and Tolstoiism are symptoms

of a disease which has attacked the population and which manifests itself in states of high emotion. Surely, then, since there is supposed to be a terrible and pestlike malady whose symptoms are Ibsenism, etc., these phenomena must greatly surpass all previous hysterias of the masses. But in point of fact there is not the slightest trace of anything of the sort. Like every new phenomenon, the writers named have excited public interest in a certain measure; but there never has been observed any morbid state or affection of the masses due to the influence of any of those writers. If by Ibsenism, Tolstoiism, etc., Nordau means morbid conceptions of the world, of art, of social relations, etc., it only amounts to this: that those authors' ways of thinking do not accord with his own. In the place of objective proof of disease Dr. Nordau leaves a blank.

Anybody acquainted with modern society must agree that the influence of those poets and writers to whose names Nordau attaches the termination *-ism* is a pretty slight one. How many people have ever heard of Ibsen and Tolstoi? For most persons art is but a pastime. They only go to the theatre for recreation and distraction. Well-to-do people, especially in the great cities, may have seen a play by Ibsen. The worthy matron pronounces that Nora did wrong in running away from her husband and children. But they trouble their heads very little with any purpose the writer may have had. That is all the Ibsenism that is prevalent.

As for Tolstoi's philosophical views, they are neither so well known nor so influential that one can speak even of a school of Tolstoiism. The unhappy and insane Nietzsche does not represent the way of thinking of the public, and never attained such importance that we could conclude from his success that his doctrines represented the general state of mind.

For an echo of the alleged degenerate art we shall there-

fore seek in vain in the mass of mankind; and as for the thence inferred "putrefaction" of our contemporaries and the "black death of degeneracy and hysteria," they are mere phantoms of the pessimistic fancy of Dr. Nordau and his learned colleagues.

Had Nordau in his sharp critique of existing conditions in the fields of society, literature, and art made no pretension to any other standpoint than that of the æsthetician and art critic, his work, in spite of its many eccentricities and falsities, would undeniably not have been without service, for he lays the scourge that is their due upon many a folly and absurdity of our time. But when he wraps himself in the solemn garb of science and, assuming the position of a psychiatrist, hurls the ban of degeneracy and hysteria upon everything that does not meet his approval, he can only be called a psychiatric *dilettante*.

It may be granted that a sort of secular hysteria really does exist. No doubt many erroneous doctrines of art and science are propagated by the *suggestibility* and emotionalism of the hysterical masses, and many evils are partly due to these phenomena. At the same time, it is certain that, thanks to the progress of science, the influence of mental disorders upon the general culture is decidedly less at present than in former periods of history, and that to-day hysterias of the masses, such as broke out in the Middle Ages, are relatively infrequent. This, however, does not imply that the number of isolated cases of derangement is less than it formerly was.

ART AND INSANITY.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL judgment of a man demands a double estimation of his mental action. We have to consider that action, in the first place, as strictly personal, and in the second place as a link in the great chain of growing humanity. Every epoch has its errors and falsities, and every man is subject to the spirit of his times, from which he is powerless to free himself. Even those mental heroes who outstripped their age in hardy flight and turned culture into new paths clung in part to the erroneous views of their contemporaries, and, as Goethe says, were connected with their century by their defects. We need never consider the errors and perversities of the time as a morbid symptom, for then all mankind would always have been mad. What one period of history has held to be high and holy another has derided and scorned; and absolute, irrefragable truth no age has been able to bring forth. The error of the time must not, therefore, be confounded with that phenomenon which was described in the last chapter under the name of secular hysteria. In this latter we have a typical image of disease observable at all times and particularly characterized by definite sensational ideas. It makes no difference what the matter of the ideas is; it is rather the whole behaviour—the collective phenomenon of the persons concerned—by which they are marked as sick. The same persons who, in the Middle Ages, danced through the streets as bewitched, might perhaps, in other eras, have become fanatic revolutionists; or they might hold intercourse with spirits of the departed in spiritualistic circles,

but they would always exhibit the same typical image of hysteria. On the other hand, the error of the time affects all alike, the strong-minded as much as the weak-minded. Everybody in the Middle Ages believed in witches and devils, so they can not be called insane for that. They simply partook of the universal error of their age. If Luther had been born in the nineteenth century he probably would not have believed in a personal devil at all.

It would therefore be absurd to judge of mental sanity by comparing the subject's opinions with our own. Our only fixed standard is the body of society. If a scientifically educated man of our day were to pay divine honour to a bull, and ascribe to it almighty power, there would be a plain pathological state. But in early Egypt such a belief would accord with the universal notion of the universe, and in a subject of Pharaoh would bespeak only the error of his time and no derangement of mind. A few centuries ago astrology was practised by even the most eminent men. How firmly Wallenstein believed in such things is well known. So great a man as Kepler wrote as follows: "According to the configurations of the rays of the stars at the birth of a man, life flows to the new-born in this or that form. If the configuration is harmonic, a fine form of heart arises, and this builds itself a beautiful habitation. At the same time the strong are born of the strong, the good of the good. Single cases stand under the might of God and under his permission in the strength of the tutelary spirit. If the heart is prepared for evil, one must endeavour to improve it. Harmony is completeness of relations. Only the Infinite knows the harmony of the spheres in their full extent; the earth-ball has but a feeble after-feeling. This after-feeling animates the earth-soul and makes the man cleverer for thinking and for every deed."

Just as we look back upon the errors of the past and consider them as a weakness of humanity gradually overcome,

so will future generations perhaps look back upon us. What we to-day hold for irrefragable truth, coming generations may indicate as the mightiest errors. The world has always erred, and so long as there are men there will be errors.

Es irrt der Mensch, so lang er strebt.
(As long as man strives he errs.)

We grow up in the errors of the time, we have them before us from childhood, and the average man takes them without consideration as true. Religion, art, morals, manners—all human culture—have their inheritance of weakness and error handed down from generation to generation and from century to century.

Es erben sich Gesetz und Rechte
Wie eine ew'ge Krankheit fort.
(Law and rights are inherited like a disease that never dies out.)

One of the chief characteristics of those powerful natures whom the world has to thank for its progress and its knowledge of new facts is, therefore, an absolute doubt of the truth of everything. "He who does not doubt," says Hagen,* "whether what is known concerning any matter may not be false, has no capacity for discovery; and for the finding out of new ways and laws, not only is he unfitted who has little understanding, but so is he, too, who has merely understanding, who is unable to conceive how it is possible to think otherwise about things concerning which the world has long since made up its mind." Hagen here quotes an admirable remark of Lichtenberg: "The common man always conforms to the reigning opinion and reigning fashion. He holds the state in which things now are to be the only one possible, and assumes an altogether passive attitude. It does not occur to him that everything, from the form of the furniture to the finest hypothesis, has been resolved upon in

* Hagen. Genie und Irrsinn.

the great council of men of which he is a member. The great genius, on the other hand, always asks, Might not this be untrue?"

While, therefore, we should certainly be guilty of a great error if, judging of an individual, we were to lay the errors of the time to his account, yet we should proceed in a thoroughly amateurish way if we were to regard as deranged those great thinkers who doubt the truth and the value of existing relations, or who in their sentiments and views depart from common sense. The great crowd has a way of calling everything "crazy" which it does not understand or which departs from its ancient habits, however irrational those ways and habits may be. But whoever is acquainted with the psychical development of humanity will see in this only a matter of course—phenomena that are necessary and that continually occur.

To judge an individual, then, it is not so important to consider *what* he thinks and does as *how* he thinks it, or what his motives for doing it may be. "Duo cum faciunt idem non est idem." That which in one man may be the symptom of mental derangement is perhaps in another brought on by a perfectly healthy and rational mental action. The psychiatrist must therefore not halt at the outward phenomenon, but will have to consider the casual connection of the psychical condition, and must endeavour to find the secret springs of the acts or words in question.

National psychology has to proceed in a similar way in judging of single phenomena. The spirit of the time, the soul of the people, which is expressed in the most diverse departments—politics, philosophy, art, literature—can only be appreciated and correctly understood when it is considered in its causal connections as a link in the great chain of historical development. Torn from its connections, no epoch of art or literature can be comprehended, and such fragmentary data will give rise to mistakes, while the crea-

tions of art as parts of a great whole, as links of a great chain, shed great light upon the thought and feeling of their time. An exact knowledge of the way in which single phenomena have arisen, an ascertainment of the motives of definite artistic expressions, are absolutely requisite for the correct judgment of art as a symptom of the contemporary soul of the people, as a partial manifestation of the spirit of the times. Whoever considers our modern art relations as things in themselves and leaves unnoticed their connection with times past and their psychological origin, will surely fail if he wishes to appreciate the same as material for a judgment upon the collective spirit of the times.

If one walks through a modern exhibition of paintings and observes there the viewers of pictures, how they sometimes stand shaking their heads before this picture or that without being able to make out what it was at all that the artist was trying to paint; if he considers the peculiar collections of colours, the glaring contrasts, the vague outlines, the peculiar ground tone, he will be led to say to himself that our time has introduced a new method of pictorial representation, and both the art critic and the psychologist must seek the *raison d'être* of the new art.

Nordau says: "All these new tendencies, realism or naturalism, 'decadentism,' neomysticism, and their sub-varieties, are manifestations of degeneration and hysteria, and identical with the mental stigmata which the observations of clinicists have unquestionably established as belonging to these."* Certain peculiarities in painting are explained by Nordau as due to defects of vision of the painter. "The curious style of certain recent painters—'impressionists,' 'stipplers,' or 'mosaists,' 'papilloteurs,' or 'quiverers,' 'roaring' colourists, dyers in gray and faded tints—becomes at once intelligible to us if we keep in view the researches of

* Degeneration, p. 43.

the Charcot school into the visual derangements in degeneration and hysteria."* Vagueness of outline is produced, Nordau says, by nystagmus, or trembling of the eyeball. Insensibility of patches of the retina occurs among degenerates. The result must be, he says, that the subjects do not see distinctly rounded images. If such a person paints what he sees he will be inclined to put spots, larger or smaller, side by side, the spots not being united together, or only imperfectly. Some painters, according to Nordau, are capable of only certain colour-sensations and perceptions, and sometimes see but a single hue. This affords his explanation of peculiar colourists, the preference for particular colours, and the monotone frequent in modern art. Dun-coloured painting is a consequence of complete absence of the sensation of colour, or *achromatopsia.*

Some colours have, according to Nordau, peculiar effects upon the nervous system. Thus red has a "force-producing" or "dynamogenous" property; and thus, says Nordau, it is easy to understand "that hysterical painters revel in red, and that hysterical beholders take special pleasure in pictures operating dynamogenously and producing feelings of pleasure." Other colours, especially violet, have an inhibiting and debilitating effect upon the nervous system. "The sight of this colour has a depressing effect, and the unpleasant feeling awakened by it induces dejection in a sorrowfully disposed mind. This suggests that painters suffering from hysteria and neurasthenia will be inclined to cover their pictures uniformly with the colour most in accordance with their condition of lassitude and exhaustion. When the entire surface of walls in *salons* and art exhibitions of the day appears veiled in uniform half mourning, this predilection for violet is simply an expression of the nervous debility of the painter."

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* Degeneration, p 27.

These remarks of Mr. Nordau may seem to many quite clever. It must be confessed that the audacity and self-importance with which he enunciates the most incredible propositions, as if he were giving information of irrefragable truth, is startling, at least. Nor does he on any single occasion make the least attempt to bring any evidence to support his arbitrary assertions, or to prove them by objective observations. All that Mr. Nordau tells us of impairment of vision of painters, of the defects of their retinas, of their nystagmus, etc., is the product of his fancy, of his imagination. Why did he not actually investigate a number of painters and convince himself how far his imaginations corresponded with facts before he put them before the world as new discoveries? Mr. Nordau has nothing to utter but unfounded assertions. Not only is proof of them entirely wanting, but their falsity is in every instance capable of ready demonstration. Whoever has had the opportunity of coming in contact with painters knows that they are not colour-blind and have no trembling of the eyeball, even if they belong to new schools of art. With the same logic with which Mr. Nordau, from the colouring of modern painters, diagnoses a "weakness of the nerves," he might, in the great painters of the Renaissance, who gave expression in their pictures to the religious ideas of the time, find a general religious insanity. It can hardly be necessary to examine more closely such superficialities, which ought to make no pretension to a scientific character.

Before I undertake the psychological analysis of the phenomena of the world of art of to-day let me be permitted, for the sake of avoiding misunderstandings, to define certain philosophical concepts which have been transported into the language of art criticism. I mean the variously applied designations, Realism, Naturalism, Idealism, and Romanticism.

By Realism I mean the aim to reproduce everything just as it is perceived by the eye in colour, form, and light, without adding or subtracting anything for the sake of beauty. Its contrary is Idealism, which takes for its task to weed from every fact its most beautiful aspect, and to suppress the unbeautiful by silence and by cloaking it, so that beauty may shine forth in all its lustre. Thus these two terms refer exclusively to the outward form of art, to its mode of presentation. A centaur playing with a nymph, or any other subject, can be painted realistically just as well as it can be painted idealistically. By Naturalism I mean an artistic aim which takes for its subjects such things as the world of observation (*Natur*) affords, and renders only actual facts, actual creatures. Romanticism, on the other hand, gives free rein to fancy, enriches the world with angels and devils, and draws its subjects from religious or mythological sources.

These different elements have from of old, and at all periods, played a great rôle in the history of art. They mostly depended on the spirit of the times. They answered to the feeling and thought of the people, and manifested themselves at the same period in different branches of art in the same way. According to the above definitions, ancient Greek art was prevailingly romantic. The character of this ideal, myth-forming people expressed itself distinctly in its art. Gods and heroes were the subjects of the masterpieces of Greek statuary; gods and heroes were sung by the poets who inspired the people through the theatre. This Romanticism was coupled with the Idealism proper to the Greeks. The beautiful alone seemed to them worthy of being represented. Symmetry of limb and a bold, courageous eye were to them as indispensable in sculpture as euphony and rhythm were in the drama. In the rough presentation of the fights of the Lapithæ and Centaurs, of gods and giants, they always knew how to vindicate the

rights of the beautiful. By pictorial grouping, by rich drapery of the vestments, by the beauty of the forms, the agreeable and conciliating were kept constantly before the sight.

Nevertheless, a certain Realism and Naturalism are discernible even in Greek art. Among the numerous portrait statues dug up at Olympia we find not seldom realistical busts whose faces had been abraded or bruised in boxing. The cherries of Zeuxis, at which the birds picked, are an example of realistic Naturalism. This aim in art was yet more active with the Romans, without, however, rising to be the prevalent tendency.

After Art had gone to sleep in the decadence of Greeks and Romans, it was reawakened in an age when a new idea and a new metaphysics, or conception of the universe, filled the minds of the peoples. Christianity, after a struggle of centuries, had conquered the world, and it offered a new romantic world to art. Hence arose that art of the Christian-romantic ages which prevailed until recently. Among single artists a certain inclination toward Naturalism showed itself during the whole period; but it could not endure in opposition to the all-ruling Romanticism which provided its subjects partly from Christianity and partly from antiquity. It was not until the nineteenth century that an open warfare broke out between Romanticism and Naturalism, while Realism at the same time sought to displace Idealism. What value Realism and Naturalism may have in comparison to Idealism and Romanticism let professed art critics decide. Our part is only to examine the phenomena from a psychological standpoint and to discover the motives which produced those phenomena.

In the course of time, as in all new movements, parties and schools were formed which waged the fiercest warfare, every man holding his school and his method to be the only right one. It is easily understood that in a matter

of this kind, in the effort to make one's own point of view as important as possible, a contestant will shoot far over the mark he had originally set before himself. So it happened that the realists, who in the beginning only opposed idealism in so far as to say that the task of art is to represent Nature in its truth, without concealment and without prevarication, were spurred on by opposition to mark their effort in their work much more strongly than was needful, so that they not only presented the ugly and disgusting, because they would not deny the existence of those elements, but went so far as to seek it out, and at last quite forgot the beautiful and overlooked it in their attention to the ugly.

It is the same with the Naturalists in their attitude toward Romanticism. Their zeal to represent real life just as it is went beyond all measure. The stronger the opposition to the new movement, the more zealously did they try to bring forward the ugly and common, while entirely overlooking the good. In this way genuine Realism and Naturalism were corrupted, and the picture often became little better than a burlesque.

The inclination, in the pursuit of a new idea, to press it far beyond what was originally intended is a phenomenon grounded in the normal human character, and found not merely in art, but in every department of human production.

Carl Gussow was the founder of the latest Realism in German painting. His endeavour was to represent Nature, unadorned, in its truth, without shrinking at any blemish whatever. His peculiar colouring, the new manner of his technique, his tendency to give special prominence to ugliness, raised at the first appearance of his pictures in Berlin a decided and general disapproval. But voices of wrath soon became weaker and weaker, adherents and admirers began to appear, imitators arose, and a new school was founded.

Somewhat earlier, but in exactly the same way, a yet more extreme Realism and Naturalism had been started in France. Manet was the founder of a new school in which we see a radically new artistic aim. While hitherto painters had hastily sketched in the open air what they observed, and afterward in their studios had repainted it, drawing largely from fancy in the process, and indifferent to the difference of light, Manet carried on his painting *en plein air*. The image, just as it presented itself to the sight, and at that very moment, must be put upon the canvas. Of course, these "impressionists" had voluntarily to renounce all finer technique. They clutched at the coarsest methods, in order that they might quickly, and without sophistication, reproduce the impression seen. The soft transition of colours which the old masters thought they perceived in Nature did not exist for Manet. For him every object bore its own abrupt colour. In a landscape illuminated by a dazzling sun, the green of the fields, the blue of the sky, the red of the roof tiles, stood unmitigated and abruptly adjacent.

This sort of Realism, combined with a corresponding Naturalism, called forth a veritable hurricane of censure. Again and again were the canvases of Manet rejected by the *Salon*, so that he had to hold an exhibition of his own. Nevertheless, a group of young men collected about him, and it augmented as time rolled on; so that at last he became a factor in the history of art. The endeavour to bring unfalsified Nature upon the canvas led to special studies of light. Previously the pictures produced in the artist's studio had a certain conventional illumination. Now there was an effort to reproduce with the brush the colours as they were presented to the artist's sight under bright sunshine, in the dusk, in bad weather, by artificial light, etc. Thus arose the dazzling colours which represent the effects of direct sunlight. The violet landscapes show the attempt

to reproduce the illumination of the dusk; the "wan painting," as Nordau calls it, is intended to represent the mist-filled landscape of the great heats of summer. It is not our part to decide how far the painters who have pursued this aim have been justified by success. The only task of psychology is to ascertain the psychical processes which were the reason of the production of the picture. To criticise it does not belong to psychological or to psychiatrical science. The psychiatrist as such is a layman in the department of art, and would be guilty of transgressing the limits of his competence were he to undertake to give a judgment of a work of art, especially to draw from it psychiatric conclusions.

As for the general end of art, we have seen, in considering the psychology of genius, that fixed rules for it do not exist. The kind of art considered needs neither a creative fancy nor a refined feeling in order to express the peculiar moods of the painter in artistic form, for painters who attempt that are rare. They wend their solitary way, without following the army of any school.

Nordau sees in the "formation of close groups or schools" a symptom of degeneration and hysteria.* He says: "Healthy artists or authors in possession of minds in a condition of well-regulated equilibrium will never think of grouping themselves into an association. . . . True talent is always personal. In its creations it reproduces itself, its own views and feelings, and not the articles of faith learned from any æsthetic apostle." This assertion is not true. Nordau confounds genius and talent; and this shows how important it is to be clear in such expressions. Simple talent by no means possesses the properties stated by Nordau.

Jean Paul Richter † drastically styles the man of talent

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* Degeneration, p. 29. † Vorschule der Æsthetik.

"the gaily imitating ape of genius." Men of talent to whom Nature has denied creative power have from of old formed groups and schools. Even Schiller became the founder of a school, although Goethe said his scholars could learn no more than his language. In the formation of schools nobody ever before saw a morbid symptom. But does Mr. Nordau see what he is doing when he classes as degenerate and hysterical all painters who possess only talent and are wanting in the creative power of genius? His great saint, Lombroso, to whom he has consecrated himself, says that "if in the nature of a genius signs of an abnormal disposition are wanting, there must be some deceptive circumstance." Yet Nordau holds those artists to be degenerate who have only talent and not genius. According to this, we must come to the conclusion that if a man has genius he is insane, and if he has only talent he is degenerate. Here the great doctrine blossoms out into its essential absurdity. But as for groups and schools, in what department are they worse nuisances than in science, and in particular in those branches to whose advocates Mr. Nordau appeals by preference?

In realistic and naturalistic movements some great painters, I admit, were concerned; and these embodied their own intuitions and sentiments in their art. But they are scattered sparsely, rising like rocks here and there out of the dead level of the ocean.

Böcklin was a painter whose pictures contain the sentiments and moods of an artist. He tried by colouring and by the peculiarity of his colour tones to lend to his pictures a mood which should affect the spectator like the tones of music, like the harmonies of an organ. In this idealistic garment of painting he wrapped, as a rule, a romantic subject. His figures are centaurs, nymphs, satyrs, bacchantes, mermaids, etc. He does not trouble himself much about the correctness of his drawing, so that the grossest errors

in that respect are common enough with him. All he aimed at was to embody certain moods in painting, and this he fully succeeded in doing in his Isle of the Dead, his Elysian Fields (Die Gefilde der Seeligen), his Leviathan (Meerungeheuer), and his Prometheus Bound. Böcklin is justly called a poet in painting. He knew how to speak in colour tones and how to awaken the most diverse kinds of moods. In spite of all enmities, he soon found adherents and imitators, who have had no slight influence on the subsequent development of art.

Let these brief sketches suffice to describe the mode of psychological origination of modern phenomena in this department. What we have here seen are but repetitions of facts often to be observed in history. New ideas, especially when they emerge suddenly and without preparation, and, above all, if they contain great departures from ancient customs, have always a rough fight to make. They have generally excited a storm of abuse and an apparently invincible opposition. It may be said that just those ideas which later appeared to have opened the paths of advance the most met at first the most stubborn resistance. It is in human nature to hold fast to the ancient inheritances and to turn away from them unreadily. Hence we must deduce the proposition that all novelties ought to be met in as fair a spirit as possible, and that we must always reflect that we are apt to have an unconscious prejudice against new ideas which depart from our habits.

But there is another class of men who, on the contrary, think everything new to be sublime and beautiful. Since they really understand neither the new nor the old, they cherish the vague feeling that the more strange and unintelligible a proposition is, the more judicious and "profound" it must be. They speak in raptures and ecstasy of the new art, and think it extremely clever to throw out as many technical terms as they may have picked up without

precisely understanding them. Nordau terms these "persons of superior intelligence who look down with pity upon the Philistine" who can not rise to their genius for understanding art, as all hysterical. I can not share this conception. It seems to me rather a characteristic due to social conditions and to imperfect education. The ostentation and vanity which so often show themselves in externals, such as furniture, etc., are still more manifest in men's acting and thinking. Many parents educate their children, not for the sake of making of them well-prepared and serviceable men, but for the sake of being able to make a show with them. Not the happiness of their children, but their own vanity, is, unfortunately, but too often the leading motive. Children are taught music, not to form their heart in the beauty of art and to ennoble their sense, but from vanity, to bring them forward as trained monkeys. This vanity, this passion to appear more than they are, is inculcated into many children of so-called good society from their childhood up. They have to dazzle by their many-sided capacity, by their understanding of art and learning. Evidently, it is for the most part hollow, and if the thin covering of superficiality is raised, nothing but a desert void is found. But they show well, and that is the main point. In society, it of course belongs to good tone to chat about philosophy, literature, and art, whether one knows anything or not. Indeed, the more strange and unintelligible anything is, the more they feel obliged to surround themselves with an appearance of intelligence. If the question is about painting, they prate about the powerful "mood"; in music the "working up of the counterpoint" impresses them, without their having the slightest understanding of such things.

I should never think of declaring anybody diseased on account of such traits of character as these, nor should I excuse his silliness in that way. No, it is not hysteria, but simply bad education that is in question. Educate your

children to candour and integrity, impress upon them that truth is the most indispensable of all virtues, that there is nothing more contemptible than the wish to appear to be more than one really is, and thus clear the world of such fools!

The sort of men whom I have here described are in their inculcated superficiality of course aware of no inclination to take up a serious calling. They would like to be imposing and to make themselves spoken of; that is their highest ambition, and often the highest ambition of their pretentious parents for them. Some feel themselves called upon to become actors; others, musicians; others, painters; others, to delight the world with their literary performances. No serious study is contemplated, of course. With a certain enthusiasm they range themselves with any new aim in art. They do not comprehend the spirit of it, but they mimic the externals of the masters.

> How he hawks and how he spits,
> To spy that out they've used their wits!

When they have daubed a canvas violet or dark blue they think that they have created a mood. If they can handle a brush like a broomstick and smear about with it so that one can not tell whether the picture is upside down or right side up, they call themselves, with pride, modern realists and naturalists.

Undoubtedly there are a number of hysterical and degenerate subjects among this class of people. But, in order to establish this, it is necessary thoroughly to investigate every single case, since this trait of character alone does not constitute disease. It would also be extremely fallacious to reason from this sort of men to the population in general. They are, at all events, exceptional individuals. Moreover, such people have existed at all periods of history. We have seen that Kant painted them in 1788 as a

well-known category of society, calling them the "monkeys of genius." And in no age can the existence of such persons escape the sharp observer.

The phenomena whose acquaintance we have made in the department of painting have their analogues in modern literature. Here, too, the Romanticism and Idealism of an earlier period of art are, in accordance with our scientific metaphysics, displaced by Naturalism and Realism. Thus the historical drama, whose subjects poets used to take from prehistorical times and whose characters they altered and idealized at will, as well as the romantic drama, in which the fantastical and supernatural came to expression, belong to times gone by. The modern poet draws his subjects not from early ages, but from the present. He does not create his characters, but seeks to reproduce what he has himself observed. He does not conceal any defect or weakness of his stage heroes, but deals out equal justice to the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly. The language of which he avails himself is not poetical, sonorous, or metaphorical. His heroes spout no iambics, but speak, for all the world, like all of us. In short, we are living in the Bessemer-metal age of literature, and poetry sounds ridiculous to us.

This realistic and naturalistic impulse in literature, which for its outward form uses the novel as well as the drama, first found vent in France. It has very often shot far beyond its mark, just as it has done in painting. Anxiety not to conceal ugliness in a weak preference for beauty, and to tell the truth that evil as well as good exists, has egged on writers to hunting up whatsoever things were hideous and whatsoever things were revolting, and has made them lose sight of the beauty and the good that really do exist.

Other motives, however, may contribute to this effect. A number of writers prefer to paint whatever is unlovely, and especially immoralities, not in the above-described and

half-involuntary way, but for the sake of the moral. They do not look upon their art as descriptive merely, but as partly rhetorical. That is to say, they do not paint life truthfully without having an ulterior design. They do so because the truth must awaken the moral sense of the people and their aspirations for a better life. While the idealist, in the pursuit of the same object, paints man in a lofty and scarce realized perfection, the realist points out the shortcomings and feebleness of what actually exists. He paints vice, not with the false glamour which an inclination for it would shed upon it, but in the true hideousness of its details, so that the contemplation of it may excite horror.

It is not my task to pass judgment upon the value and justification of the different aims of art. I only analyze them psychologically. I therefore pass at once to another class of writers, who have the same preference for painting immoralities from a third motive.

These are those same uneducated and unintelligent ignoramuses whom we mentioned above; for literature, too, is reduced to hack work in their hands. Many persons whose capacities were sufficient to make them good artisans, who might have been taught, perhaps, to make a really good pair of shoes, or otherwise to fulfil a useful function in the world, stick to the pen, because a bad writer is more respectable than a good mechanic. They write, not because they have any calling for literature, but because they know no other trade. These factotums of the great literary army, shooting up like toadstools from the dung heap, seize upon every dripping of filth that they can smell out, and ask themselves, "How much money can I make with this production?" The question, "What is the literary value of this fact?" does not occur to them. That the task of art and literature is to ennoble the taste of the public they have clean forgotten, even if they ever thought of it. On the contrary, they speculate on the baser impulses and evil quali-

ties of the rabble. They have spied out the externals of the modern Naturalists and Realists without attempting to penetrate into the spirit of their works. Like senseless monkeys, they wade through vulgarities and obscenities in order to excite the hankerings of the great crowd, in order to be known as writers of the modern school, and in order to succeed in a financial sense. The shameful influence of this sort of authors—or, rather, writers—upon the population is rooted in the disproportions of modern society. A reform in this respect can only come from their gradual removal and from the elevation of the culture and taste of the people.

Here, again, we meet, too, those unfortunate degenerate subjects who possess a certain literary gift, but whose whole mental action is morbid. They often show that marked inclination for every kind of vileness and coarseness which is called moral insanity. This can not fail to betray itself in their writings. The frivolous and vulgar attract them, because they answer to their own thought and feeling. The more obscene and indecent is the subject with which they deal, the more they feel themselves in their own free element. But we must not reason from the character of these last writers to that of authors as a whole. It is not they who give literature in general its purpose. They only ape the form of genuine authorship without being able to comprehend its purpose.

Thus the Realism and Naturalism which are found in all departments of modern art and literature are not, as Nordau thinks, marks of a universal putrescence and nervous prostration, a "pestilential malady of degeneration and hysteria." Though those endeavours often overshoot their mark, they are simply signs of that universal spirit of the times that desiderates truth and fact, and gives the lie to all that is mystical and supernatural.

The foregoing inquiries show that the same phenomena in art may be produced in ways most diverse psycholog-

ically. It is the most unscientific levity to treat them summarily and to say, as Nordau does, that whoever paints violet pictures has weak nerves, or whoever paints in the manner of Manet has lesions of the retina, etc. In a psychiatric diagnosis it is requisite strictly to individualize; and thus we are brought to a question of the highest importance for the psychiatrist: *How far can we, from a work of art or literature, diagnose a mental disease of its author?*

The influence of derangements of the mind upon the action of the subjects depends, in the first place, upon the kind of disease. In a great number of cases the disease does not manifest itself at all in action. In others, in consequence of diminished efficiency, the value of the work is diminished, and finally positively insane ideas may be manifest in products of the insane.

In an acquired disease accompanied with gradual decay of intelligence, as in general paresis, the disease may be detected by comparison with previous performances, and occasionally the typical perversities in the works of these patients lead to recognition of their misfortune. In the congenital weakness of mind of degenerate artists and *littérateurs* the case is different. The example of Courbet shows that a weak-minded man may paint very nice pictures while sane persons sometimes mine out the vilest stuff. For this reason the value of a work of art is not decisive in the diagnosis of the mental condition. Nor, as I said before, is the psychiatrist, as such, competent to express an opinion concerning the value of such a work.

Sometimes delusions make their appearance in everything the insane person does. A painter may, in consequence of religious delusions, paint nothing but pictures of saints. But to maintain the converse—that whoever paints nothing but saints is suffering from religious insanity—would be ridiculous. No diagnosis, therefore, of insanity can be made from a painting or similar work of art, nor from a

musical composition. A musician under melancholia may, owing to his morbid mood, compose only elegies and funeral marches; but that does not authorize us to presume that because a composer only writes elegiac music he is probably insane. The assertion of certain supersubtile minds that certain compositions of Schumann's betray his morbid state of heart rests upon mere words, and deserves no notice.

But with writers it is quite otherwise. Their action is much more comprehensive, and commonly affords a much deeper insight into the psychical life of the author than a painting can do. It is within the power of a poet or a writer to disclose in his creations a mirror of his whole inner life, his sentiments, and his thoughts. Hence we shall sometimes be quite able to diagnose the insanity of a *littérateur* from his works.

But even here we must proceed with the utmost caution and reserve. The descriptions of the poet can only attain a diagnostic value when they have express reference to his own individuality. The objective description of situations and characters can usually afford no inference concerning the psychical life of the poet, and we should commit a gross error were we, without any particular information, to identify him with a character created by him. Elegiac and melancholy verses, even when they bespeak the sentiments of the poet, can not, taken by themselves, justify us in presuming a pathological condition. We have seen how Goethe frequently grieved nigh unto death, and really contemplated suicide, yet we should not be justified in assuming melancholy in the psychiatric sense.

Where manifest delusions are described we can, in many cases, state positively that the writer is insane. We shall do so with all the greater certainty when it is not merely insanity in general that is indicated, but the description takes on the type of a well-known morbid form.

Rousseau is a good instance in point. His Confes-

sions and Dialogues afford proof positive of insanity. A typical delusion of persecution is manifest in his saying that "the Kings of Russia, England, and France, all nobles, the women, the priests, and mankind in general," wounded by some statements in his works, "had banded themselves together and declared a dreadful war" upon him. A full examination of the insanity of Rousseau, with special reference to the above works, has been undertaken by Möbius.*

Tasso, who suffered from *melancholia agitata* complicated with hallucinations, wrote in a letter: "My sadness is so deep and persistent that people often think me crazy, and I am forced to assent to the opinion myself when I am not able to shut my thoughts up within my breast, but break out into long monologues. My hallucinations are human and demoniac. The human express themselves in shouts and cries, such as men, and particularly women, utter, and in bestial laughter. The demoniac express themselves in songs, etc. I take a book in my hand to gain some information, and at once voices sound in my ears and I distinguish the names of Paolo and Fulvia." A quite typical example of a modern poet whose insanity can be determined from his works is Strindberg with his passionate misogyny and his other absurdities. A comprehensive account of the state of mind of this author as betrayed in his writings would fill a volume. I will therefore merely note the most important points in a single writing which fully suffice to render the diagnosis of his insanity certain.

In Die Beichte eines Thoren (The Confession of a Fool) Strindberg describes his ten years of married life. His wife had been divorced from her first husband, a baron. The book is, in substance, a serious complaint against this wife, whom he accuses of infidelity. If a sane man thinks himself betrayed by his wife, he will either leave her or

* Die Krankengeschichte Rousseaus.

forgive her. But in either case, both for the sake of his own honour and for that of the children—and Strindberg had several—he will endeavour, as far as possible, to screen such family affairs from publicity, and will rather lead the public to suppose the fault is his than call the mother of his children a harlot before all the world. True, departure from this principle is not of itself a symptom of insanity; yet it must be admitted that it is at least very surprising that a man should write a book for no other purpose than to accuse his married wife, the mother of his children, of infidelity.

Let us, however, consider the grave charges which Strindberg publicly makes against his wife. From the moment the woman left her first husband in order to marry him he becomes suspicious and believes she has intercourse with other men. He does not suspect any individual in particular, but every single man with whom she comes in contact for a long series of years awakens his doubt and jealousy. Though he is never able to adduce one single real fact by way of proof, he is yet unceasingly tortured by the idea of the infidelity of his wife. She not only has illicit relations with other men, but even extends her unnatural desires, in *amor lesbicus*, to her own sex. She can not make a call, nor even kiss a young girl, but he believes he detects an unlawful, sexually contranatural act; and in his mind's eye he continually sees his wife in prison for her infractions of the moral law, etc. In spite of it all, he loves his wife, and can not leave her. Though he is fully convinced of her crime and depravity, yet the sight of her "foot in its black stocking," or even of her "garter," is enough to make him fall at her feet and, "with tears in his eyes," implore her pardon. Still the pangs of jealousy torment him anew. No less than six times he "escapes," and that into distant countries. But scarcely is he away when desire seizes upon him. He is "shackled, not with chains of iron, which he might break, but with chains of

India rubber, which draw him back." He either returns or has his wife and children follow him. There is a *Wiedersehen* with great emotion, and straightway new pangs of jealousy. Every waiter in the hotel, the *concierge*, a lieutenant who comes to the *table d'hôte*, are objects of his wife's love. Once he was with his wife in a boat which was managed by a sailor who wore very high boots. His wife looked at the boots, and forthwith he was beside himself, detecting in that look a sexual aberration. The same pangs of jealousy were excited by any intercourse of his wife with any female. Thus he describes an old "devilish-looking person" whom he says his wife hugged and kissed in a "lustful" way. Once when his wife came to him she seemed to him to have the face of "that old devil's dam," and he at once concluded that she had been with her, and had committed illicit acts. Thus, no matter whether it were man or woman, young or old, ugly or beautiful, in every living being he detected a partner of his wife's sin, and was driven by continual pangs of jealousy into that desperation in which he wrote the book. It ends with the words, "This, beloved, is my vengeance." Such is his own account. The *audiatur et altera pars* may here be dispensed with. It is a manifest case of jealous insanity. The image of the disease is, however, essentially completed by the nature of his description. The satisfaction with which he speaks of himself, the self-glorification which appears in all his descriptions, is either one of the signs of mental degeneration or, what is more probable, there is a delusion of grandeur. He always speaks of himself as the "great poet," the "renowned scholar," etc. In one place he says that people are jealous of his great talent, and therefore might put him out of the way, which is a characteristic manifestation of the delusion of persecution.

Among the most important symptoms of such maladies are the so-called referential ideas. The patients refer all

that goes on about them to themselves. In every look, in every harmless remark of a stranger, they fancy they detect a hidden slight intended for them. Whatever is said in their hearing they connect with their own individual selves, and find in the simplest things strong confirmation of their delusions. If people stand up in a shop, it is because they are present. If anybody in the street spits, he means to do it at them. All the articles in the newspaper are meant to apply to them. In short, everything that happens has reference to them.

This symptom is strongly marked throughout Strindberg's book. He misunderstands the most harmless remarks of his wife. In travelling, if anybody speaks to him, either they do it to mortify him or to make advances to his wife. The most ordinary counsels of those about him he takes for cunning traps.

It would, of course, carry me too far to inquire into all the particulars set down in this bulky book in reference to this morbid phenomenon. It may suffice here to mention one marked example of such referential ideas. When Strindberg first read Ibsen's Wild Duck, he immediately thought the whole piece was intended for him and was only written on his account. He expresses himself as follows:

"It was a drama of the famous Norwegian spy, the inventor of equality madness. How the book fell into my hands I could not say. But now everything was clear, and gave occasion to the worst suspicions concerning the reputation of my wife. The plot of the drama was as follows: A photographer (a nickname I had earned by my novels drawn from real life) has married a person of doubtful repute, who had formerly been the mistress of a great proprietor. The woman supports the household from a secret fund which she derives from her former paramour. In addition to that, she carries on the business of her husband, a good for nothing who spends his time drinking in

the society of persons of no consequence. Now, that is a misrepresentation of the facts committed by the reporters. They were informed that Maria [Strindberg's wife] made translations, but they did not know that it was I who gratuitously corrected them and paid over to her the sums received for them.

"Matters become bad when the poor photographer discovers that the adored daughter who comes before her time into the world is not his child, and that the wife has warned him when she induced him to marry her. To complete his disgrace, the husband consents to accept a large sum as indemnity from the former lover. By this I understand Maria's loan upon the baron's security, which I indorsed after my wedding. But as for the birth of the daughter, I can see no trace of analogy, for my daughter was not born until two years after the wedding. But hold! The dead girl! There, I am on the track! The dead child which forced us to a marriage which otherwise would not have taken place!

"I prepared a great scene for the afternoon. I wished to catch Maria in cross-examination, to which I wished to give the form of a defence for us both. We had been equally attacked by the scarecrow of the masculinists, who had been paid for the pretty job."

This is a perfect example of such a referential idea, than which nothing more typical can be imagined. Let it be observed how every detail of Ibsen's play is made use of in order to establish a connection with the delusion. I have therefore no doubt at all that Strindberg was insane. His malady took a well-known form, called *paranoia simplex chronica.*

Such patients are, in the true sense of the words, dangerous to society. Strindberg himself tells how one day, "without direct occasion," without being able himself to account for his act, but following a sudden impulse, he

fell upon his wife unawares and beat her unmercifully, so that she only escaped further abuse by the cries of the children, who came running to her. Immediately after this conduct he surrendered himself to full sensuous love for this wife. He remarks himself that it is a peculiar union in which one drubs his wife by day and enjoys her embraces at night.

That a psychiatrical diagnosis is not to be based on isolated facts, under pain of error, but that the underlying motives of the suspicious behaviour must be examined most thoroughly, has been repeatedly said above. I do not know how I can better render my position clear than by placing into juxtaposition with the above case, in which I myself diagnose insanity, one or two others in which I can not accept such diagnoses. These will illustrate the extreme errors into which one may be led either by an insufficient examination or by an arbitrary delimitation of the latitude of health, and by accepting a definite type as the normal man.

That Dante had epileptic fits, is announced by Lombroso in a recent paper.* "In the Divina Commedia, Dante himself describes several fits in which he fell headlong and lost consciousness." The passages referred to are two, as follows: After Charon had driven together the apostates from God, in order to carry them over the river, and Virgil had described the terrors which awaited them, Dante says:†

> He ceased. The gloomy region shook amain!
> Still its mere memory bathes with sweat my brow.
> Rumbled that land of tears with moaning wind;
> A light, vermilion-coloured, flashed from hell;
> And, wholly vanquishing my palsied mind,
> Even as a man whom sleep o'ertakes, I fell.
>
> *Parson's Translation.*

* Lombroso. Neurose bei Dante und Michelangelo. Die Zukunft, 1893.
† Inferno, iii, 130.

Another passage is as follows:

> Meanwhile he moaned so much, compassion took
> My sense away, and like a corse I dropped.
>
> *Parson's Translation.*

Lombroso thinks himself forced by these passages to diagnose epilepsy in Dante! Are we to take this seriously? If one of the comic papers had undertaken to parody psychiatry, how could it have been more extravagant? It would seem to me almost ludicrous to pay attention to such assertions and to parley with them. Lombroso, however, is not only a professor of psychiatry, but he is the founder of a "school," and has many adherents, not to say warm advocates. He is said to be "one of the loftiest mental phenomena of the century." He has "poured a veritable flood of light, which those alone have not perceived who obdurately close their eyes or who are too short-sighted to derive benefit from any enlightenment whatsoever." *

Lombroso thinks, then, that Dante, in the verses quoted, describes an actual state in which he found himself. But what justifies such a presumption? To be logical, he ought to take all the other descriptions in the Divina Commedia for actual events. He ought to suppose that Dante actually saw and heard everything he describes in hell and in purgatory; in other words, he ought to consider Dante to be an hallucinant. Why does he not infer this from such lines as the following?

> A leopard, glittering in a dappled hide,
> That would not flee, though light and full of speed,
> Hindering my way, before me I descried,
> And often turned, as doubtful to proceed.
>
> *Parson's Translation.*

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* See Dr. Nordau's dedication of Degeneration to Prof. Lombroso.

On the same principles, we ought here to diagnose hallucinations, imperative ideas, or consecutive delusion. Dante addresses this supplication to Virgil:

> Behold yon monster in my road, whose rage
> Thrills through my veins until my pulses quake;
> Defend me from her, thou illustrious sage!
>
> *Parson's Translation.*

Why does not Lombroso infer from the "rage which thrills through the veins" that Dante had hallucinations of sensation? All this is inferable by the same logical principle as the epilepsy. The verses from which he infers epilepsy only describe the crushing sensations which the sight of the terrors of hell occasion in him.

In the Purgatorio, Dante describes three phenomena which he saw in a dreamlike state.

> To the next cornice we had come; here fled
> All power of speech, mine eyes were ravished so.
> For, seized with ecstasy, I seemed to be
> Rapt in a sudden vision of a crowd
> Met in a temple.
>
> *Parson's Translation.*

> Soon as my mind, that from itself had swerved,
> Came back to true things that outside it lie,
> I knew my dreams false, but their truth observed.
> My leader then, who could perceive that I
> Walked like a man by somnolence unnerved,
> Said: "Come! what ails thee that thou canst not keep
> Thy footing straight, but more than half a league
> Hast moved with faltering steps, as if by sleep
> Or wine o'ercome, and eyes that show fatigue?"
>
> *Parson's Translation.*

Lombroso says: "It will be seen that the fits in the Purgatorio take more of the dreamy, somnambulic cast; those of the Paradiso more of the ecstatic." Such a state he infers from the following:

So steadfast and attentive were mine eyes
In satisfying their decennial thirst,
That all my other senses were extinct,
And upon this side and on that they had
Walls of indifference, so the holy smile
Drew them into itself with the old net.

Longfellow's Translation.

If from such poetical expressions a somnambulic condition is presumable, then all poets suffer from that malady. Not only poets, but all ordinary human beings make use of expressions equally somnambulic. They say: "I did not know whether I was on my head or my heels," "I was senseless with joy," "The world swam before my eyes," "I saw blood," "I can give no account of what I did, but when I came to myself I was miles away." Just such terms, clothed in poetic garb, are adduced by Lombroso as evidences of a somnambulic or ecstatic state. So he quotes the following:

At this voice saw I many little flames
From step to step descending and revolving,
And every revolution made them fairer.
Round about this one came they and stood still,
And a cry uttered so loud a sound
It here could find no parallel, nor I
Distinguished it, the thunder so o'ercame me.

So did my mind, among those aliments
Becoming larger, issue from itself,
And that which it became can not remember.

Longfellow's Translation.

Such are the evidences upon which "Master Lombroso" rests his thesis that Dante had epilepsy accompanied with somnambulic and ecstatic states. His disciples say that only the "obdurate" and the "imbecile" can fail to perceive the great wisdom of this new doctrine.

In his chapter on Examples of Insane Genius in his Genio

e Follia, Lombroso adduces Schopenhauer as a case in point. Let us consider upon what this diagnosis rests. Lombroso says: "Schopenhauer suffered from melancholy. Dread of smallpox scared him away from Naples; the idea that he had used poisoned snuff ousted him from Verona. From Berlin he fled before the cholera, having once before left the same capital because of a levy of soldiers." No evidence whatever is adduced that Schopenhauer suffered from melancholia. On the contrary, Schopenhauer had all his life long an enormous self-conceit, while genuine subjects of melancholy are marked by the absence of that trait, considering themselves rather as bad and incapable. Unless it be proposed to identify an earnest and pessimistic temperament with melancholy, there is no reason for saying that Schopenhauer had melancholy. As for timidity about smallpox, cholera, and the conscription, it is not a symptom of insanity. Lombroso enlarges upon his great feeling of anxiety, his fear of men, etc. But these are phenomena found in all neurasthenic subjects, and are not in the least indicative of mental disease. "He hated Jews, women, and, above all, philosophers. Dogs, on the other hand, he loved so that he remembered them in his will." If hatred of Jews is to be taken as a morbid symptom, the world is in a bad way! Schopenhauer's hatred of philosophers can readily be explained. His essay on women is eccentric and passionate. But is that insanity? Lombroso himself, in his own book on women,* has far overtrumped Schopenhauer on this point; so that he ought to be cautious about considering misogyny as a morbid symptom. "Everything," continues Lombroso, "was for him an object of reflection and of earnest discussion. He sought after the causes of the most insignificant things, such as his own excellent appetite, of

* Lombroso and G. Ferrero. Das Weib als Verbrecherin und Prostituierte, uebersetzt von Kurella, Hamburg, 1893.

moonlight, etc." The only peculiarity here is the juxtaposition of his appetite and moonlight, which is not Schopenhauer's doing. Then we read: "He believed in the table communications of the spiritualists, was convinced that his dog's crooked leg could be straightened by magnetism, that he could recover his hearing in the same way." I know nothing about Schopenhauer's belief in spiritualism. As far as I know, he wrote nothing about it. Lombroso ought to elucidate this, and state his authority for the assertion. But what I do know is that Lombroso himself was so befooled by a spiritualistic she-swindler that he wrote: "I heartily repent and am ashamed that I have so stubbornly contested the spiritualistic facts." * There is nothing additional, except matters which may be called little *traits* of character, but are certainly not morbid symptoms. "He who so often suffered from the intolerance of others, raised against Moleschott and Büchner the most grievous and unjustifiable menaces. He hid his joy from nobody when he learned that they had been forbidden to teach." Just because Schopenhauer had suffered so much at the hands of his adversaries, he became malicious and filled with hate against them. We further read: "He also considered himself as the object, as the victim of a widely disseminated conspiracy of professors of philosophy directed peculiarly against him, that they had come to an agreement in Gotha not to mention his works, but to kill them by silence. On the other hand, he feared that they would express an opinion on his works." But this opinion of Schopenhauer, whether quite true or not, had a sane reason in the hostile attitude of the university professors toward him. It would therefore be a great mistake to diagnose from that a delusion of persecution, especially since the whole mode of manifestation of the idea had nothing in

* Der Zeitgeist. Berlin, 1892, No. 4.

common with a clinical symptom. Thus Lombroso's data afford no presumption that Schopenhauer was at any time mentally diseased, and I can but pronounce the attempt to range him in the category of insane genius to be distinctly unsuccessful.

Nordau, for whom every assertion of Lombroso's is an oracle, goes a step further, and pronounces that "the congregation of Schopenhauer is made up of the degenerate and insane." Of the man himself he says: "Imagine a Schopenhauer who had written no astonishing books, and we should have before us only a repulsive *lusus naturæ*, whose morals would necessarily exclude him from all respectable society, and whose fixed idea that he was a victim of persecution would point him out as a subject for a madhouse." Now, quite independently of the gross blunder about the delusion of persecution, this proposition is psychologically entirely incorrect. At best it amounts only to this: that had Schopenhauer not been Schopenhauer, then he would have been another man than he was. I have shown, in speaking of the psychology of genius, that the little peculiarities of character and manners were readily explained by the peculiar mental action of men of genius. It is therefore illogical, to say the least, to subtract his genius and leave his peculiarities as a remainder.

The special diagnoses that Nordau sets forth from the writings or art works of famous men are quite of a piece with his judgment of the population generally, and form a fit pendant to Lombroso's diagnosis of the epilepsy of Dante. But Nordau considerably surpasses the method of his master. Lombroso limits his efforts to the discovery of symptoms of insanity, and proceeds according to the well-known method, "was nicht herausinterprätiert werden kann, das wird hineininterprätiert," or what can not be made out by exegesis is to be made in by inegesis. Nordau, on the other hand, is an æsthetic critic. With the professional om-

niscience of his craft, he criticises whatever falls within the domains of philosophy, literature, music, and painting, and as soon as the criticism turns out unfavourable to the author, down comes the diagnosis of degeneration. Thereupon, by Lombroso's method, a list of symptoms are *hineininterprätiert*, or made in, and the justice of the verdict is beyond all cavil. The boyishness and amateurishness of such a proceeding need scarcely be pointed out.

Zola, as everybody knows, is the founder of modern Naturalism in literature. His "Naturalism" is, however, not Naturalism in the sense defined above, though perhaps the definition may agree with his theoretical views. But practically his Naturalism is that which—in its endeavour to exhibit life without any sort of falsehood, without ignoring all that is grievous and base in it, nor pretending that there is more of the agreeable and the elevated than there really is—so widely overshoots its mark as to search out the vile and the degraded. He does not fairly sample human life upon the average; the characters he paints do not afford a type of the time in its general character. On the contrary, all his novels describe the members of one degenerating family which is subject to extreme deficiencies, mostly of morals. Upon this aim of Zola's Nordau pours out the critic's bitterest vials, and in fact he flies into a rage with the founder of Naturalism. "He," says Nordau, "who ridicules the 'idealists' as being narrators of 'exceptional cases,' of that which 'never happened,' has chosen for the subject of his *magnum opus* the most exceptional case he could possibly have found—a group of degenerates, lunatics, criminals, prostitutes, and 'mattoids,' whose morbid nature places them apart from the species, who do not belong to a regular society, but are expelled from it, and at strife with it; who conduct themselves as complete strangers to their epoch and country, and are, by their manner of existence, not members of any modern civilized people whatever, but

belong to a horde of primitive wild men of bygone ages."* Does the reader not see against what an enormous and crass contradiction Mr. Nordau here bumps his head? What! He who, in most self-sufficient fashion and in his most resonant chest tones, proclaims that for the last half century the good society of all civilized countries has been in a progressive mental dissolution, a state of "putrefaction," and that we are now "in the midst of a grave endemic, a species of black plague of degeneration and hysteria"—*he* asserts all at once that the degenerate, the weak-minded, the criminal, "are the most exceptional case" that could be found, that degenerates not only belong to no regular society, but that they only "belong to a horde of primitive wild men of bygone ages!" Well, well! Why, wherein does Zola conflict with Nordau? Zola describes a group of degenerate persons, and, being a naturalist, he is understood to imply that this is a type, a fair sample, a representative of a family of our times. Is not this a Nordau in the shape of a novelist? Nordau's purpose is to instruct us that the society of our time is in a state of putrefaction and that we are in a black plague of degeneration. Anybody can see that he is Zola dressed up like a scientific man. But when Nordau looks in the glass and sees his own caricature grinning him in the face he loses his temper and declares that such a society, just as he himself had painted it, is, of all things that exist, "the most exceptional case." Nordau, like the witch of the fairy tale, has unwittingly passed judgment upon himself, and has destroyed his whole theory with his own hand. But here as everywhere he exaggerates beyond all bounds. To say that Zola's degenerate family naturally belongs to some "horde of primitive wild men of bygone ages," is for its inaccuracy and its screaming tone on a par with his "black

* Degeneration, p. 495.

plague of degeneration." Nordau thus takes up a peculiar attitude, for he declares that "Zola's novels do not prove that things are badly managed in this world, but merely that Zola's nervous system is out of order";* and his reason is that Zola fancies he sees in a degenerate family a type of modern society, which seems to be precisely what Nordau himself says.

But the way in which Nordau, in order to support the correctness of his diagnosis from Zola's novels, endeavours to refer all possible symptoms of insanity to the author is the most comical thing that ever was. Even Lombroso, though he is utterly unjustified in using the fancies of the poet as data, does nevertheless adhere to what Dante's language, taken literally, expresses, for Dante does say, "*I* fell down," etc. Nordau, however, without the slightest reason, identifies the novelist with his quite objectively described characters. Although Nordau himself finds their originals in the Karangal family, yet he saddles the author with all the faults of the degenerate personages of his novels. Thus he says: "Zola is affected by *Coprolalia* to a very high degree." Coprolalia means an involuntary utterance of maledictions and vulgar speech. It belongs to the series of imperative acts and is often observed in degenerates. Zola himself is adjudged to exhibit this symptom because he puts curses and dirty language into the mouths of the degenerates described by him. From his pictures of prostitutes and narratives of sexual perversities and exacerbations Nordau, without further information, concludes that Zola himself is sexually insane. Because Zola, in his naturalistic endeavour to paint everything unfalsified, minutely indicates the various smells, Nordau presumes that he has a morbidly developed sense of smell. "He shows at times an unhealthy predominance of

* *Ibid.*, p. 499.

the sensations of smell in his consciousness and a perversion of the olfactory sense which make the worst odours, especially those of all human excretions, appear to him particularly agreeable and sensually stimulating." "Smellers among degenerates," says Nordau, "represent an atavism going back, not only to the primeval period of man, but infinitely more remote still, to an epoch anterior to man. Their atavism retrogrades to animals among whom sexual activity was directly excited by odoriferous substances, as it is still at the present day in the musk deer, or who, like the dog, obtained their knowledge of the world by the action of their noses." * To this category Zola belongs, because his novels have many mentions of smells! What should we come to were we to judge all poets according to this example, and identify them with their creations?

A phenomenon, interesting in many respects, which has given occasion to various psychiatric discussions, is that of Tolstoi. Both poet and philosopher, he is of most interest to us in our present inquiry in his quality as philosopher. Already in early years the writings of Tolstoi displayed, besides a remarkable gift of graphic description and notable psychological character study, also a struggle for a metaphysics which might appease the doubts and contradictions born in his soul. That civilization which consists in bringing pleasure and joy to a slender minority at the expense of the mass of humanity seemed to him worthless, and property the source of all evils. In The Cossacks and Cholstomêr he gave expression to these views. Later he became engrossed with the problem of death—the connection between being and non-being. In Three Deaths he paints the disparity between Nature and civilization in respect to death. The solution of this problem gradually absorbed him more and more. New doubts continually arose, until he at

* *Ibid.*, p. 503.

last came to deny every end of life, and suffered, according to his own narrative, unspeakable anguish about it.

In My Confession he describes how for a long time he sought in vain to answer the question, "Wherefore do I live?" Whatever he undertook, this question pressed forward—"To what end, and what then?" If at death all ceases, he asked himself, to what end are we producing and working? What is the use of being respected and renowned? "Any day disease and death may come to those I love and to me, and nothing but putrefaction and worms will be left. My actions, however great they may be, will all be forgotten—whether sooner or later is indeed indifferent. The chief matter is that I will no longer be in existence. To what end, then, are all these cares? That a man should see this, and seeing it, go on living, is indeed a matter for astonishment."

Powerfully does he describe his sensations in the following words:

"It is now a long, long while since that Oriental tale was told of the traveller in the desert who is pursued by an animal that has grown wild. In order to escape it he jumps into a waterless well, at whose bottom, however, a dragon is lying, with open jaws, ready to devour him. The unfortunate man dares not creep out, lest he be torn to pieces by the savage animal; and he also does not dare to jump down to the bottom of the well for fear of being devoured by the dragon. So he remains clinging to the branch of a wild shrub which has taken root in a rift of the well. But his hands begin to get tired, and he feels that it will soon be quite impossible for him to escape the destruction that awaits him on either hand; nevertheless, he still holds on, but now sees that two mice—a black one and a white one—are running about the trunk of the very shrub to which he is clinging and nibbling it away. Soon—aye, soon!—will the shrub break off and precipitate him to the bottom of the well into

the jaws of the monster. The traveller sees this and knows full well that he is irrevocably doomed to death; yet, while he still clings to the shrub, he looks about him and discovers drops of honey on its leaves. He reaches out to these with his tongue and licks them.

"Just in the same way do I hold on to the branch of life. I know that I can not escape the dragon of death, who is waiting, ready to rend me, and I can not comprehend why I have been condemned to this torture. I try to suck the honey which in earlier years gave me comfort, but it delights me no longer, and the white and the black mouse gnaw day and night at the branch to which I am clinging. I see the dragon quite clearly, and the honey is no longer sweet on my lips. These alone I do indeed see plainly—the unavoidable dragon and the mice—and I can not turn my gaze away from them. This is no fairy tale, but a real, irrefutable truth which is comprehensible to every one.

"The earlier delusion caused by the joys of life, which made me forget the horror of the dragon, cheats me no longer. They may say to me as often as they like: 'You are not able to comprehend the meaning of life; do not think about it—live.' I can not do that any more, because I have done so indeed too long already. Now, it is no longer possible for me to avoid seeing the days and the nights which are hurrying by and carrying me toward death. I see only this because it is the truth. Everything else is untruth. Those two drops of honey which more than anything else diverted my eyes from the horrible truth—the love of my family and love of writing, which last I called 'art'—seem no longer sweet to me."

In vain had he endeavoured to gain enlightenment from science on the question that tormented him, "Wherefore do I live?" And so he sought to find the solution in life itself: "And I found that the people of my class have four

ways of getting out of this dreadful position in which we all are situated.

"The first way out is that of ignorance. It consists in this: that one does not need to know, does not need to understand, that life is an evil and devoid of sense. The persons belonging to this category—who for the most part are women or very young or stupid men—have not yet comprehended that question of life which Schopenhauer, Solomon, and Buddha set before themselves. They see neither the dragon that is awaiting them nor the mice that are gnawing at the shrubs to which they are clinging, and they lick the drops of honey . . .

"The second way out is that of the epicurean. It consists of this: that having come to see the hopelessness of life, one simply enjoys the good it offers, looking neither at the dragon nor the mice, and sucks up carefully every drop of honey, especially if there is a great deal of it. . . .

"The third way out is that of the strong and energetic. It consists in destroying life as soon as the knowledge is attained that life is an evil and devoid of meaning. . . .

"The fourth way out is that of the weak. It consists in this: that, in spite of the fact that the evil and its lack of meaning are comprehended, one does not cease to live, though knowing that nothing will be attained in the end. The persons who form this group know that death is better than life, but lack the courage to act rationally by making an end of the deception as quickly as possible and taking their own lives. Yet they act as if they still expected something. That is the way out of the weak; for why do I not procure myself the greater good, which I know full well, and which lies within my grasp? . . . To this group it was that I belonged."

In his further researches, Tolstoi arrived at the conclusion that "rational knowledge" could only extend to that which we are in a position to apprehend.

"What did I do when I sought for an answer in the philosophical sciences? I studied the thoughts of those who found themselves in the same position as I, but they had no answer to the question, Wherefore do I live? It is obvious that I, too, could not learn anything more than what I already knew—that one is not able to know anything."

He came to this conclusion: that "rational knowledge" can apply only the finite to the finite and the infinite to the infinite, and that it is therefore impossible to find in "rational knowledge" any answer to his question. Only the assumption of something which is beyond our capacity of apprehension, and therefore not capable of being established by rational knowledge, can give an answer to his question, and that something is the joining of the finite with the infinite—faith. "Thus I inevitably came to see that in addition to the rational knowledge, which at an earlier time I had considered to be the only thing, all mankind possesses still another knowledge, an irrational one—faith, which makes life possible." Thus it was that Tolstoi, at the age of fifty-five, returned to the orthodox Christian faith in which he was originally trained, and in which he now again found that calm and contentment after which he hankered.

Nordau does not agree with Tolstoi's philosophy, therefore Tolstoi is a degenerate. Now, unless the conception of psychical degeneration is to be completely turned upside down, it can not be assumed that a person can suddenly become a degenerate in the fifty-fifth year of his life. One may get an attack of mental disease at any age, but degeneration means disturbances of development; and therefore if a person has not manifested any disturbances of this kind before his fifty-fifth year, he is not a degenerate. If it is to be assumed that Tolstoi's views were caused by some diseased mental process, then it ought to be proved that he had become mentally diseased, that he had suffered from de-

lusions or other phenomena of the same kind, or psychical disturbances must be found in his whole past life.

Nordau does none of these things. He contents himself, in his customary manner, merely with criticising Tolstoi's philosophy, and sets up his own infallible, sole, proper metaphysics in opposition to it, and the degree of deviation from his opinion defines the degree of the "degeneration" of the other.

This is not the place, nor do I feel any special inclination, to undertake a discussion of Nordau's philosophy; but, as he fancies that he sees a symptom of disease in every deviation from his own opinion, it will be as well for us to consider at least its principal points.

Tolstoi was tormented by the question, "Wherefore do I live?" That is in Nordau's eyes a sign of degeneration, for he considers this question a superfluous one, since it can be answered quite satisfactorily without any special difficulty. The man who has faith, says Nordau, will have no occasion to ponder over this question. "The unbeliever, who is convinced that his life is a particular instance of the universal life of Nature, that his individuality has blossomed into existence as a necessary law-governed operation of eternal, organic forces, knows also very well not only 'wherefore,' but also 'what for,' he lives. He lives because, and as long as, life is to him a source of gratification—that is to say, of joy and happiness."* According to this view, life ought to be for all living people a source of joy and happiness, since, as Nordau says, one lives only so long as this is the case. But does this view correspond with the facts? Do not thousands of persons live who have no faith, whose life is to them anything but a source of joy and happiness? Any one who really knows the world in which we live will know that there are thousands of persons devoid of faith

* Degeneration, p. 151.

whose life gives them nothing but unspeakable suffering, torments, and misery, and who would yet not voluntarily leave this world. We often see persons who have been deprived by incurable and painful disease of every joy and hope yet clinging to life with every fibre of their being. Joy and happiness, therefore, are not the causes of our continuing to live. It is a powerful instinct residing in all living beings which lies at the root of our clinging to life—the instinct of self-preservation. This instinct is compounded of a number of impulses and sensations, such as the impulses to eat, drink, sleep, etc. It is the satisfying of these impulses, which in the case of human beings are refined to a high degree, as we have seen in another place, that forms the joys of life. The latter, therefore, are only the results of our continuing to live, and not, as Nordau maintains, its causes, in which light the instinct alone can be regarded.

Quite apart from its general incorrectness, therefore, Nordau's explanation is no answer to Tolstoi's question, "Wherefore do I live?" Our instincts form one cause of our existence. It is not, however, into this, but into the aim that Tolstoi inquires. If, nevertheless, the satisfying of the impulses—that is, the joys—of which Nordau speaks is considered to be the aim of life, if consequently it is maintained that we live in order to eat, while we yet eat in order to live, then one is guilty of a voluntary perversion of the facts.

The question as to the aim and meaning of life has occupied many philosophers before Tolstoi, and will continue, in spite of Nordau, to be frequently a subject of reflection, and no symptom of degeneration need be seen therein. Nordau, of course, according to his well-known method of perverting and misusing scientific terms, calls this investigation of the philosopher a "mania of doubt and brooding thought." He says: "It is not, then, the noble desire for knowledge which forces Tolstoi to be ceaselessly occupied with ques-

tions concerning the aim and meaning of life, but the degenerative mania of doubt and brooding thought, which is barren, because no answer, no explanation, can satisfy them; for it is obvious that be the 'therefore' ever so exhaustive, it can never silence the mechanically impulsive 'wherefore' proceeding from the unconscious." * Does Nordau really consider his "therefore" clear and exhaustive? That the real mania of doubt of the degenerate can never be satisfied is perfectly true, but it would be ridiculous to turn this proposition around and say that every one who fosters doubts for which he is unable to find any satisfactory explanation is a degenerate. Besides, Nordau has here once more defeated his own ends, for Tolstoi did after all find satisfaction, and that in religious faith.

I freely concede that it is psychologically a peculiar phenomenon that any one who has occupied himself so much with natural sciences as Tolstoi has should suddenly become an orthodox believer; but if the nature and manner in which he has come to this do not correspond with a clinical form of disease, then faith as such does not entitle us in any way to assume a pathological process. Religious faith can be reconciled with the metaphysics of the present day, and is to be considered as a symptom of disease only when it manifests itself, as in paranoia, as a delusive idea.

Nordau is an optimist, and therefore declares the whole system of pessimism in philosophy to be a symptom of disease. His interpretation of the riddle of life "explains optimism and pessimism simply as an adequate or inadequate vitality, as the existence or absence of adaptability, as health or illness." † He overlooks completely the fact that optimism and pessimism in philosophy are entirely the results of intellectual action, that it is in an objective manner that the philosopher attains his conclusions, and that these are

* *Ibid.*, p. 166. † *Ibid.*, p. 150.

independent of his subjective sensation, or exert only a secondary influence upon it. Schopenhauer, in spite of his pessimism, desired a long life. What Nordau means, what he designates as health and disease, refers entirely to subjective sensation, and therefore to the love of life and weariness thereof. That philosophical pessimism may in many cases be the result of a diseased feeling of weariness can be conceded without further discussion, but this is by no means invariably the rule, and therefore here also, as always is the case in psychiatry, there is need of a rigid individualization. Were Nordau less superficial he would know that subjective optimism—the love of life—may be just as complete a symptom of disease as the weariness of life. The power of easy endurance in the insane paretic who finds himself in a happy state of mind, and to whom the world appears in its rosiest aspect, is a classical symptom of this disease. The weak-minded person whose imbecility prevents him from reflecting on the seriousness of life, and who is imbued with a sense of his own importance and greatness, generally feels himself happy and contented, whereas, as we have seen in our discussion about the man of genius, great, powerful minds are just those that are always discontented and dissatisfied. That optimism and pessimism are to be conceived of as health and disease, is therefore another of those arbitrary assertions of Nordau which lack all scientific foundation.

In his researches into the subject of morality it was especially modern marriage which occupied Tolstoi, and he endeavoured to study its nature and right of existence from all sides. The Kreutzer Sonata, in which he developed his views upon this point, very soon gained a world-wide reputation, and gave rise to the most violent discussions and misunderstandings. The conclusion to be extracted from this work (which, in fact, has been extracted therefrom) is that, according to his moral teaching, the destruction of

the human species should be brought about by absolute continence, and that mankind should die out with the present generation. On the strength of this theory there were people who fancied that they recognised in Tolstoi a sexual psychopath, and traced to this fact his surprising doctrines. In consequence of these misunderstandings Tolstoi was induced, after repeated requests, to explain in a special commentary what had been his real intention in writing the Kreutzer Sonata.

After a detailed examination of matrimonial and extra-matrimonial sexual intercourse in its sanitary and social relations, he sets up absolute continence as an ideal worth striving for. To the objection that in carrying out this ideal the human race would become extinct he rejoins: "Apart from the fact that the destruction of the human race is no new idea for the inhabitants of our world, that it is in the case of religious persons an article of faith, and in the case of scientists an inevitable conclusion from the observations regarding the cooling of the sun, there lies in this objection a widespread and ancient error. It is said that if mankind attains the ideal of perfect chastity it destroys itself, and that therefore this ideal is not a true one. But those who speak in this way confuse intentionally or unintentionally two distinct subjects—the direction or precept and the ideal. Chastity is not a precept or direction, but an ideal, or a preliminary condition thereto. But an ideal remains an ideal only so long as its accomplishment is possible solely in the idea, in the mind, so long as it appears to be attainable solely in eternity, and consequently so long as the possibility of an approach thereto is infinite. Could the ideal be attained (if we can conceive of its accomplishment), then it would cease to be an ideal."

Accordingly, Tolstoi merely attacks sexual immorality, and neither this nor his other doctrines of morality, in which

he preaches the love of one's neighbour and the equal rights of all men, contains any new feature.

In questions of philosophy, of metaphysics and morality, in which we are still very far from being able to establish absolute truths, we ought therefore, more than on any other subject whatever, to practise toleration toward our antagonists. Every one must be free to criticise his opponent, and Nordau may say of Tolstoi that his "theory of life, the fruit of the despairing mental labour of his whole life, is therefore nothing but a haze, a failure to comprehend his own questions and answers and hollow verbiage. His ethics—on which he himself lays a far greater stress than on his philosophy—is not in much better case than the latter." *

So long as Nordau confines himself to simple criticism, freedom must be accorded to him to pass sentence on Tolstoi. But every one will have the same right with reference to Nordau's ethics and metaphysics. To deduct, however, a condition of disease from a deviation from one's own particular opinion is, and must always be, unscientific.

Many persons would without doubt judge Nordau's philosophy and ethics in a similar manner as he does Tolstoi's. Take, for example, what he says about marriage: "Marriage, moreover, was not instituted for the man, but for the woman and the child. It is a protective social institution for the benefit of the weaker part. Man has not yet conquered and humanized his polygamous animal instincts to the same extent as woman. It would, for the most part, be quite agreeable to him to exchange the woman he possesses for a new one." † If every one who does not agree with this view, as well as with very many others of Nordau's contentions on this point, is a degenerate, there would not, I fancy, be many sane persons in this world besides Mr. Nordau.

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* *Ibid.*, p. 154.

† *Ibid.*, p. 415.

If marriage, as he maintains, was instituted, not for the man, but only for the woman and child; if the man enters into an agreement for his whole life, not from ideas of self-interest, but merely from ideas of compassion, and in order to give "protection" to the "weaker part," then marriage as a whole would have neither title nor moral foundation. An agreement only holds so long as it is founded on legitimate mutual interests. When these fail, the agreement must be dissolved, and no power in the world will be able to uphold it.

The idea that Nature intended man to be polygamic but the woman not, is not original with Nordau. It has been frequently brought forward, and has in later times found upholders in Hartmann* and others. I have never been able to see in this idea anything beyond an endeavour to furnish a scientific excuse for the immorality and excesses of the stronger sex. Even though it should be assumed that in general the sexual instinct is stronger in men than in women, would this justify a morality which permits the man to do what he likes, even to indulge in the most dissolute debauchery, while the woman, on the contrary, who lacks the strength even only once to withstand an impulse, is branded as deeply fallen? Is this the protection which the "stronger" sex gives to the "weaker"?

But Nordau's opinion—that man originally did not have stronger sexual instincts than the woman, but that he has "not yet conquered and humanized his polygamous animal instincts to the same extent as woman"—is certainly new. Therefore, according to him, the "weak woman," who requires the protection of the strong man, stands higher on the ladder of development than the strong man himself. What wisdom we do invent to palliate our own weaknesses!

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* Ed. von Hartmann. The Philosophy of the Unconscious.

Nordau's chief fault and error are that he considers himself justified in drawing a psychiatric conclusion from his purely subjective criticism of a work of art. The art-critic's point of view toward a work of art must be an essentially different one from that of the psychologist or psychiatrist. The first merely considers the work as such according to its value; the latter, on the other hand, seeks to ascertain from the work of art the psychical processes of the author. It is evident that to do this it is indispensable to get at the purpose of the artist or writer which lies at the root of his work. Nordau, however, exercises criticism primarily, and troubles himself little about the real purpose of the writer.

In the same way he judges, among others, also Ibsen. The literature with reference to this writer is enormously large, and opinions about his purpose are very diverse. By many Ibsen is not generally regarded as a Naturalist, but it is fancied that in his characters are to be found symbolical incorporations of poetical and philosophical ideas. That his later writings, in particular the Master Builder, are to be regarded in an allegorical light, seems, indeed, pretty well established. Nordau, however, treats them throughout as purely naturalistic productions, criticising the individual characters without at the same time reflecting whether it was at all the writer's purpose to describe real characters taken from life.

It would carry me too far if I were to indulge here in further researches as to whether the view Nordau has adopted regarding Ibsen's writings corresponds with that writer's intention. In any event, Nordau's psychiatric judgment of Ibsen is again entirely based on a purely subjective criticism of his works.

How important it is for the psychologist and psychiatrist, in judging a work of art, primarily to ascertain the purpose of the artist—the motive which lies at the basis of his work

—I will make clear by an example, which shows to sufficiency into what errors one may fall when, in forming psychiatric expert opinions, he confines himself to subjective criticism of a work of art, instead of investigating the psychological sources to which it owes its origin. This example is that of Richard Wagner, who has already given manifold occasion to psychiatric errors. As this case is instructive for many reasons, and at the same time of general interest, I shall investigate it a little more in detail, and treat of it in a separate chapter.

RICHARD WAGNER AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY.

IT is beyond the scope of this work to give anything like a connected biography of Wagner, even though it would conduce largely to a better understanding of our researches. I must therefore refer the reader to the copious literature which exists on the subject of Wagner's life, and especially to his own statements, in his Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen. I shall confine myself here simply to calling attention to those points in his life which are requisite for an explanation of the psychical processes to which his artistic creations owe their origin. My treatment of the latter will not aim at anything like an artistic critical study, but will proceed wholly from a psychological point of view in so far as may be requisite for the formation of a psychological analysis.

Wagner was born at Leipsic on May 22, 1813. His father is described as a clever and intelligent man, by occupation a clerk of police, who died as early as November, 1813—that is to say, half a year after the birth of his son. Shortly afterward the child's mother married a friend of her late husband, Louis Geyer, an actor, painter, and poet, who died when Wagner was only seven years of age. The latter's education, consequently, was chiefly directed by his mother, who devoted herself to this duty with all love and conscientiousness. He attended the Dresden school of art and later the Nicolai school in Leipsic.

Wagner was no infant prodigy. Yet even at an early age he gave evidence of a lively fantasy, indulging in

manifold poetical attempts; but it was not until the period of his youth that he first displayed any decided talent for music. It was at the Gewandhaus concerts in Leipsic that he first came to know Beethoven's compositions, which made a strong impression on his youthful mind. With ardent zeal he buried himself in the study of Beethoven, and Dorn thus expresses himself with regard to him: "I doubt whether there has ever been a young composer who was more conversant with Beethoven's works than Wagner was at the age of eighteen."

Even in the years of his youth that impulse made itself felt in Wagner which we have learned to recognise as a characteristic of great men—the creative impulse. He himself was perfectly aware of it, and put it in a poetical form when he said that a fairy had stood beside his cradle and granted him a gift that is frequently disdained—"The spirit that is ne'er content, which always thinks of something new." This impulse to create was manifested during the period of Wagner's artistic development in two different ways. Two opposing elements struggled in him for the mastery; sometimes the one gained the upper hand, sometimes the other, until, tried by this struggle, he followed his true artistic nature and remained true to it to the end. These two elements were the impulse to give expression to his artistic sensations and feelings, which impulse we have found to have been the guiding principle of all the creations of Goethe, and the objectively formed craving to create, which was excited from without.

After a number of minor attempts in the way of writing poetry and composing, Wagner put together a libretto called the Fairies, the idea of which was borrowed from one of Gozzi's tales. He says, to be true: "What I constructed was certainly nothing else than just what I wanted—namely, a libretto; and I set it to music in accordance with the impressions that Beethoven, Weber, and Marschner had made

upon me."* But he adds: "And yet, not the suitability for a libretto which I had discovered in Gozzi's tale alone drew me toward it, but the subject itself touched me to the quick." In the poetical subject of the fairy who gave up her immortality that she might possess the man she loved, Wagner had unconsciously given artistic expression to the mood within him.

At the same time an impulse had made itself felt in his case which perfectly harmonized with his age and the external influences working upon him—an impulse toward a brilliant artistic career, an ardent longing for fame and honour. "An impulse grew within me, amounting in intensity to a consuming yearning, to rise above the littleness and wretchedness of the circumstances that controlled me. This impulse, however, had only a secondary influence on my actual life itself; primarily, it aimed at a brilliant career as an artist."†

While in this state of mind Wagner wrote a second opera—Forbidden Love, or the Novice of Palermo—for which he had adapted the plot of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure. In the summer of 1834 he had accepted the post of musical director at the theatre of Magdeburg. With reference to this he says: "My remarkable converse with singers behind the scenes and before the footlights entirely corresponded with my inclination toward diverse forms of amusement."‡ During this period he completed the composition of Forbidden Love. His sole purpose was to please, to win fame and approbation. "For a holiday performance on New Year's day, 1835, I hastily prepared some music which generally pleased. Easily-won successes like this confirmed me very strongly in the view that, in order to please, one ought certainly not to consider too scrupulously the

* Richard Wagner. Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen, iv, p. 312.
† *Ibid.*, iv, p. 317. ‡ *Ibid.*, i, p. 14.

means at one's command. And it was upon this principle that I proceeded with the composition of my Forbidden Love."

We perceive an essential difference between the origin of the Fairies and that of Forbidden Love. Wagner himself recognised this, and says on the subject: "If this subject is compared with that of the Fairies, it will be noticed that the possibility was open to me to develop myself according to either of two fundamentally different tendencies; to the sacred earnestness of my original sentiment there opposed itself a bold tendency, nourished by the impressions of my life, toward wild, sensuous impetuosity, toward a saucy joyousness, which seemed to contradict the former most emphatically." * Farther on he says: "Whoever chooses to compare this composition with the Fairies will hardly be able to comprehend how so marked a conversion of tendencies could be brought about in so short a time. My path led me in the first instance to utter frivolity in my opinions about art; this was the case during the first period of my entry upon the practical career of musical director at the theatre. The rehearsing and direction of those very pliant fashionable French operas, the piquant and daring elements in their orchestral effects, gave me many a childish joy when I could send them out into the audience from my director's desk." †

In the autumn of 1837 Wagner went to Riga to take the post of first musical director of the theatre there. Here he found excellent material for his opera, and applied himself "with much love to using it." He composed for the singers several interpolations for various operas, and also made up the text for a two-act comic opera, the Happy Bear Family, the subject of which he had borrowed from a narrative in the Thousand and One Nights. He had already composed

* *Ibid.*, iv, p. 315. † *Ibid.*, iv, p. 316.

one part of this when he became filled with disgust at the work and turned away from it with aversion. He now determined "to do something really great—to write an opera, for the production of which only the most important forces should be appropriate," so that he might not be tempted to bring it before the public in the limited circumstances in which he happened to be. It should be to him an incentive to exert himself to the utmost to get out of the conditions that were so loathsome to him.

In this state of mind he sketched out the plan of a great tragic opera in five acts—Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes—the material for which he had borrowed from Bulwer Lytton's story. He strove in this to create something great and brilliant, which would satisfy his artistic ambition. "Even here, in the composition of the text, there was in my mind really nothing else than to write an effective libretto. The Grand Opera, with all its scenic and musical splendour, its effectful, passionate musical fulness, loomed up before me; and it became the desire of my artistic ambition not merely to seek to imitate it, but to surpass all it had offered hitherto with unbounded lavishness."

One portion of this opera had already been completed when Wagner resolved to break with his present life. Without means, without preparation, without any prospects, he straightway betook himself from Riga to Paris. During the sea voyage, which lasted four weeks and in the course of which he visited the coast of Norway, there recurred to him the legend of the Flying Dutchman, with which at an earlier period he had become familiar. This legendary figure now made a deep impression upon his mind. "He gained spiritual power from my own peculiar situation; from the storms, the billows, the rocky northern shore and the activity of the sailors, he got physiognomy and colour."

When Wagner reached Paris and became dazzled by the brilliancy of its musical world, the figure of the Flying

Dutchman was at first blotted out again, and his efforts seemed once more wholly directed toward the opera that should make an impression. "When I was present at the brilliant performances of the Grand Opera, an event, by the way, which did not happen frequently, a voluptuous, wheedling warmth mounted up in me, and gave me the wish, the hope—nay, the certainty—that I would yet be able to triumph here. This magnificence of accessories, applied with enthusiastic artistic purpose, seemed to me to be the zenith of art, and I felt myself not in the least incapable of attaining this zenith. Moreover, I recollect that I was quite willing to find inspiration in all phases of that artistic world which appeared to bear in any way upon my aim; what was meretricious and unsubstantial was concealed from my sight by a brilliancy of sensuous externals such as I had never seen before."*

This mood, this striving after fame and splendour, was not, however, destined to dominate the soul of the artist for any length of time, but soon became transformed into a most profound contempt for this artistic tendency. There arose in him an unspeakable yearning which he was himself frequently unable to judge correctly. To this were added the unfortunate material circumstances in which Wagner happened to be at that time, which constrained him to grasp at the humblest means to gain his livelihood. In order to be introduced by singers into the salons of Paris, he composed several French romances, declared himself ready to compose the music for a vulgar vaudeville for one of the theatres of the boulevards, and finally had to occupy himself with the arrangement of arias from "favourite operas" for the *cornet-à-piston*. In these circumstances, the yearning in him assumed a more and more definite shape; the artistic world with its brilliancy and glitter, as he now saw it, and the great Parisi-

* *Ibid.*, iv, p. 321.

an opera filled him with disgust and aversion, and from this moment he longed to leave it all for a dimly perceived ideal of intelligent affection. While in this state of mind, the Flying Dutchman again occurred to him. In this mythical character's unspeakable longing for unselfish love, Wagner saw the reflected image of his inmost soul. The "woman" after whom the Dutchman hankered, and who unselfishly sacrificed herself for him, represented that ideal human love of which the artist himself stood in need. "It was this Flying Dutchman who so repeatedly and with such irresistible power of attraction sprang up within me out of the quagmires and billows of my life; it was the first national poem which made any deep impression on my heart and urged me, as artist, to interpret and mould it into a work of art." *

It was in this mood that the poem and music of the Flying Dutchman were brought into being. Wagner compares the legend with that of Odysseus longing for his domestic hearth, and of the Wandering Jew. But in the case of the Dutchman, the woman he desired was no longer the actually existing woman at home, but an ideal which did not yet exist but only was perceived—the ideal of that human love which sought no recompense. "The yearning of Odysseus for his home, hearth, and wife had, after having been nurtured by the sufferings of the Wandering Jew into a desire for death, been strengthened into the craving after something new, unknown, not yet visibly present, but already felt."

Wagner fancied that he would be able to find the satisfaction of his yearning in Germany rather than in Paris, and while he was busy with the composition of the Flying Dutchman, the object for which he longed assumed the shape of home—not the home, of course, that he had left,

* *Ibid.*, iv, p. 328.

but an ideal home, one still to be expected. "A delicate, longing patriotism took possession of me, of whose existence I had hitherto not had the slightest suspicion. This patriotism was free from all political colouring, for even at that time I was well aware that political Germany, as opposed in any way to political France, did not possess for me the least power of attraction. It was the feeling of homelessness in Paris that awakened in me the yearning for my German home; this yearning, however, did not have a reference to anything that I had known of old, which could be gained back, but to something felt and desired, new and unknown, which I was to win for the first time, and about which I only knew that I would certainly not find it here in Paris. It was the yearning of my Flying Dutchman for the woman—not, as I have said, Odysseus's housewife, but the woman who brought salvation, whose features did not occur to me in any definite shape, but who merely hovered before my eyes as the incarnation of the female element. And this element assumed the appearance of home—that is, of closest companionship."

In the Flying Dutchman that artistic tendency had triumphed in Wagner which corresponded with his true nature, and from this time forward he remained true to it to the last. No longer were splendour and fame the aims of his artistic creation; art became to him solely a means of expression, a means of communicating his inmost feelings and moods, and his only wish was to be understood—that is to say, to awaken by his art in others the same sensations to which it owed its origin. It was no longer his aim to gain admiration and create astonishment. "One thing kept me up—my art, which was for me a means not for the acquisition of fame and money, but for the communication of my views to sensitive hearts."* All his artistic creations were

* *Ibid.*, vi, 372.

henceforth, as it were, the mirror of his soul; his art was the proclaimer of his inmost sensations.

Just as we perceived in the case of the objective poet, Shakespeare, two easily distinguishable factors in the artist and his work, so we saw in every line of the subjective Goethe the poet himself in his most intimate personality. As I have already said in another place, we could not for this reason love Goethe's poems without also esteeming in them the personality of the poet, for poet and artistic work are there blended into one indissoluble whole. From this point of view alone was Goethe able to comprehend art, and he therefore said: "One must be something in order to make something. It is the personal character of the writer which makes him important in the eyes of the public, and not the products of his talent."

Wagner had the same experience in this regard as Goethe; he also is a subjective artist who can not be separated from his art; every one of his artistic creations also forms "a fragment of a great confession." His art forms a portion of his personality, and is therefore no more separable from him than speech is from man. He could therefore hope to be understood only where people felt and experienced with him, not merely where they were ready to consider a work of art in an objective manner. They must be able to penetrate with fullest sympathy into his personal sensations and moods. Wagner therefore says: "As such [that is to say, as his friends, by whom alone he could hope to be understood] I can not, however, regard those who pretend to love me as an artist and yet think it right to deny me their sympathy as a man. If the separation of the artist from the man is something just as unthinkable as the divorce of the soul from the body, and if it is established that an artist can never be loved, that his art can never be comprehended unless he be also (at all events, unconsciously and involuntarily) loved as a man, and unless his life also be

understood along with his art, so much the less, as things are at the present day, and considering the despicably bad condition of our public artistic conditions, can an artist of my tendency be loved, and his art consequently be understood, unless this understanding and that possible love be founded before everything upon sympathy—that is to say, upon compassion and fellow-feeling with the most human part of his life."* Wagner was perfectly right in this, though only with reference to "an artist of his tendency," and he agrees in this opinion with Goethe; but we have seen that there is also an objective art to which this opinion would not apply. Wagner, however, from his point of view, could not come to any other judgment; he felt that he could only be understood in those cases in which people felt and experienced with him. His art appealed not to the intellect, but to the feelings. "The artist appeals to the feelings and not to the intellect; if an answer is given him from the side of the intellect, it may be said that he has not been understood, and the criticism amounts in truth to nothing else than the confession of a lack of understanding of the work of art, which can only be understood with the feelings."†

Wagner saw, as Goethe expressed it, "the general in the particular," and it was in this that his artistic gifts lay. In giving artistic expression to his own aspirations he unconsciously touched the feelings of humanity. He felt that he could only be understood by those who could feel artistically with him, "who happened to be in a more or less similar position with the artist, developed under similar conditions of life, and who could sympathize with him from the bottom of their nature and heart, so that they were, under certain circumstances, in a position to assume his view as their own, and were able to take the required intense interest in the effort to give them expression."

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* *Ibid.*, iv, p. 288. † *Ibid.*, iv, p. 389.

With a view to giving artistic expression to his feelings, Wagner felt himself drawn toward a form of art which permitted him to appeal in the most unlimited manner possible to the receptive sensations, and this form of art was the musical drama. Of course this form of art had to be very different from the opera which had existed up to this time, so as to be in conformity with the difference between their respective aims. The aim of the opera of that day was the satisfaction of the prevailing artistic taste of an unintelligent mob, the satisfaction of a longing for diversion and amusement. The opera had to do justice to all these requirements. The dominating factor of the opera was the music, to which everything else was subordinate. To create "fine melodies" was the duty of the composer; the libretto was a secondary consideration, and sound and word had no intimate connection with each other. There was no desire for anything like "sense" in a libretto; the words were always merely the handmaids of the music, to suit which they were put together. Just in the same way as the poet was, so to speak, the train-bearer of the musician, the musician became the slave of the interpreter. Airs and duets were composed in order to give the singers the opportunity of displaying their artistic skill; composers had no hesitation in writing for particular singers, and in letting them prescribe the nature of their work, in order to attain as "powerful an effect" as possible.

Between productions of this kind and a form of art whose single aim it was to give expression to the emotions and feelings of the artist, there must naturally be a fundamental distinction. In Wagner's eyes music was nothing further than a means of expression which in a co-ordinate manner stood opposed to the other factors of the work as a whole, of the drama. The meaning of the music begins at the point where that of the words no longer suffices. Temperaments and passions may be described in every case by

the spoken words, but they can not be immediately brought to expression. Music, on the other hand, is the immediate proclaimer of the sensations; the words appeal to the intellect, the music appeals to the feelings.

Wagner felt very well that he had begun his true artistic career with the Flying Dutchman. "At that point my career as a poet begins where I left that of a composer of librettos." His works of art originated thereafter no longer in reflection, but in the impulse to communicate moods that were present in him. "My treatment was new; it was suggested to me out of my inmost mood, and forced upon me by the impulse to communicate this mood. In order to deliver myself of what was in me—that is to say, in order to obey the inward pressure to communicate with persons feeling like me—I had as an artist to enter upon a path that had certainly not been suggested to me by outward experience, and that which impels a man hereto is necessity, a deeply felt, constraining necessity, though one not known to the practical mind."

The Flying Dutchman was finished. The indefinite yearning of the artist assumed a more and more tangible form in the longing for home:

'Tis strange, methinks, to give its name
To every land to which I roam;
But not to find that dearest land
For which I burn—the land called home.*

It was in this state of mind that Wagner left Paris in the spring of 1842. Meanwhile his Rienzi had been accepted for the court theatre at Dresden; the Flying Dutchman was to be produced at Berlin; the future smiled upon the artist with rosy serenity, and with happy, joyous heart he set out

* Unmöglich dünkt mich's dass ich nenne
Die Länder alle, die ich fand;
Das einz'ge, nur, nach dem ich brenne,
Ich find 'es nicht, mein Heimatland.

for home. "For the first time I saw the Rhine, and with bright tears in my eyes I, poor artist that I was, swore eternal fidelity to my German Fatherland."* In due course he reached Dresden, where he was received with love and sympathy. Rienzi was produced and proved a brilliant triumph. "After a long struggle amid paltry circumstances," so Wagner writes, "after hard-fought battles, sufferings, and condemnation amid the loveless Parisian artistic and social life, I quickly found myself in surroundings that acknowledged me, helped me, and frequently met me in the most affectionate spirit."

Wagner had already been for some time acquainted with the legend of Tannhäuser through an old book of folk-tales. On the journey from Paris to Dresden he visited the Wartburg for the first time, and it was in this way that this legend, which in the book in question was loosely connected with the singers' war, came once more clearly before his eyes. But in Dresden, where he again took part in the outward pomp of modern artistic life, this impression gradually faded away. The extraordinary success of his Rienzi, the veneration and admiration which fell to his lot, deceived him once again with respect to the condition of art as it really existed, and caused him to regard it in an idealistic light. The post of director of the royal opera at Dresden having at this time been offered to him, it became perfectly clear to him that the public life of art did not imply any true art such as he had learned to know it, but only a "self-interest which adorned itself with an artistic appearance." But the brilliancy of such a post in the eyes of others blinded him also, and he became director of the royal opera.

The production of the Flying Dutchman at Berlin had come to naught; but, in consequence of the great success which had attended Rienzi, the director of the court theatre

* *Ibid.*, i. p. 24.

of Dresden decided to have the Flying Dutchman also produced. The opera was quickly rehearsed under Wagner's own direction, but fell entirely flat. The public had expected something like Rienzi, but this "new tendency" left it perfectly cold and unsympathetic. His Rienzi was repeated with so much the more enthusiasm, and it must have been clear to Wagner which path he ought to tread if he wished to make sure of fame and fortune. Once more the temptation came to him to be untrue to his real artistic nature. "The sensuous, luxurious mood," so he writes, "which had come upon me by virtue of the complete change in my external circumstances, and in consequence of the first enjoyment of an assured position, but especially also of a certain amount of affection and admiration on the part of the public, became intensified into a pleasurable self-content, and soon led me more and more deeply into a misunderstanding and misuse of my true nature as it had hitherto developed itself, with its necessary consequences." *

Once again the impulse came to Wagner to write a great, brilliant opera in the style of Rienzi, and he therefore took up a scheme which had already been sketched out at an earlier period, an historical opera in five acts—The Saracens—of which Manfred, son of the Emperor Frederick II, was the hero. But this artistic tendency, which was merely calculated for splendour and effect and was repugnant to his whole nature, was bound very soon to fill him with aversion and disgust. He himself describes this internal struggle: "An impulse, such as in every person impels toward the immediate present, now determined me, in my special circumstances as an artist, to a tendency which was bound again very soon and violently to disgust me. This impulse would only have been appeased in life if I had also sought as an artist to aspire to brilliancy and profit by a

* *Ibid.*, iv, p. 330.

perfect subordination of my true nature to the demands of the public taste. I would have had to sacrifice myself to fashion and to playing upon the public's taste, and here, at this point, it was clear to my feeling that in actually entering upon this tendency I would have to come to naught from sheer disgust."

In this state of mind Tannhäuser again presented himself to Wagner's soul, in his longing henceforth to get out of the world of sensuality and pleasure:

> There's more than joy affects my heart,
> 'Midst my delight I seek for smart;
> Far from thy realm I must me hie,
> O Queen! O Goddess! Let me fly!*

He turned from this artistic tendency with aversion, and became filled with a mighty yearning after satisfaction in a higher, nobler element, which, in antithesis to the sensual world of enjoyment that was about him and that strove for fame and splendour, must appear to him like a "pure, chaste, maidenly, unapproachable and intangible loving being." "How," thus proceeds Wagner, "could this yearning for love, the noblest sensation which, taking into consideration my nature, I could feel, be anything but the craving after emancipation from the earthly present, after rebirth into an element of infinite love, such as is not to be found on earth, but seemed only attainable by death?"

In this internal struggle his true artist nature had once again come off victorious. Wagner had on many occasions called music his "good angel"; now he was freed by it through the irresistible impulse to truer, more unselfish devotion, from the sensuous striving after external splendour and fame. A sublime, unattainable ideal of the most unsel-

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*Nicht Lust allein liegt mir am Herzen,
Aus Freuden sehn' ich mich nach Schmerzen;
Aus deinem Reiche muss ich flieh'n,
O Königin, Göttin! Lass mich zieh'n.

fish sacrifice, only tangible in death, hovered before him in the form of a pure, chaste maiden, and within him sounded the words of redemption:

> An angel prayed for thee on earth—
> All blissful did she soar o'er thee:
> Elizabeth!*

This was the state of mind to which Tannhäuser owed its origin. How painfully must it have affected Wagner to be so entirely misunderstood in his intentions and efforts! He himself says: "How silly must those critics appear to me who have become ingenious under the influence of modern loose living, when they try to impute to my Tannhäuser a specifically Christian, impotently heavenward tendency!"† The figure of Tannhäuser had sprung from his inmost soul; in it his true feelings and sensations found artistic incorporation. He now found himself again on the path of the only art which was capable of satisfying him, yet felt that here he must always deny himself fame and splendour. But he shunned neither struggle nor conflict; the freedom of his artistic creation was of more value to him than the sensual pleasures which had surrounded him.

> Nay, I must off the earth to see,
> With thee I can a slave but be;
> For liberty I still do crave,
> For full free liberty I rave;
> To toil and strife I must be near,
> Though 'tis to die and disappear;
> So from thy realm I must me hie—
> O Queen! O Goddess! Let me fly!‡

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* Ein Engel bat für dich auf Erden—
Bald schwebt er segnend über dir:
Elizabeth!

† *Ibid.*, iv, p. 343.

‡ Doch hin muss ich zur Welt der Erden,
Bei dir kann ich nur Sklave werden;
Nach Freiheit doch verlange ich,
Nach Freiheit, Freiheit dürstet's mich;

Well did he know what a thorny path he would henceforth have to traverse, for he says: "In writing this work I signed my own death warrant. No longer could I now hope for aught from the modern world of art." Fully did he feel the curse of Venus:

> Thy shame will then dishonour breed;
> Expelled and cursed, taunts follow thee;
> Crushed and oppressed I see thee come,
> Thy dishonoured head with dust defiled.*

Nevertheless, bravely and unhesitatingly he went forward upon the only path that was possible for him.

He felt that on this path he would alienate the public and many friends who had hitherto honoured him; he knew that he would not be able to offer an adequate substitute for the amusing and pleasure-giving popular opera of the day; he recognised that his works were entirely unfitted for the artistic stage as it then was. Thus he says: "A piece that is likely to draw good houses, that is likely to be produced before the public for a lengthy period, or perhaps always, alternated with other pieces like it, ought not to be derived from any mood, nor to require for its understanding any particular mood. For this purpose productions must be taken that are either based on no mood in particular, or even on no mood at all, and therefore do not aim to appeal to a particular mood in the public. They should furnish, by the splendour of representation, and through the sympathy felt for the performers, a light form of entertainment."

The directory of the court theatre at Dresden decided

> Zu Kampf und Streite will ich stehen,
> Sei's auch auf Tod und Untergehen—
> Drum muss aus deinem Reich ich flieh'n—
> O Königin, Göttin! Lass mich zieh'n.
> * Deiner Schande Schmach blüht dir dann auf;
> Gebannt, verflucht, folgt dir der Hohn;
> Zerknirscht, zertreten seh' ich dich nahen,
> Bedeckt mit Staub das entehrte Haupt.

upon a production of Tannhäuser, which by this time had been finished. The opera was lavishly mounted, and—met with the same fate as the Flying Dutchman. The public was once more disappointed in its expectations, and did not hesitate to make known its extreme dissatisfaction.

Wagner was overpowered by a feeling of utter isolation. He had, indeed, found the means of giving artistic form and expression to his feelings; he now possessed, indeed, a language by which he could communicate his sensations, but there was no one who understood this language, who shared his sensations, who felt and experienced with him. "I had now become conscious of my perfect isolation as an artistic person to such an extent that it was only from this very feeling of isolation that I could draw the impulse and strength to endeavor to speak to those around me." *

While in this state of mind there occurred to his fantasy a legend which he had already studied in connection with the Tannhäuser saga—that of Lohengrin. In Tannhäuser, Wagner had swung himself free from a world of sensuality, of outward brilliancy and vain aspiration; he had succeeded in soaring aloft to the desired height of purity and chastity. He had escaped from the world of weak indulgence to the lonely height of noblest renunciation. But on this height an inexpressible yearning filled him to get away from this sunlike brilliancy of chastest purity to the refreshing warmth of life, to the complete surrender of unselfish love. He yearned, not to get back to the life which he had left, but to be in a new ideal life which he had not yet known. "From this height my longing looks perceived—woman, the woman for whom the Flying Dutchman yearned from the ocean depth of his misery; the woman who like a star of heaven directed Tannhäuser from the dens of sensuality of the Venusberg to the way upward, and who now

* *Ibid.*, iv, p. 360.

drew Lohengrin down from sunny heights to the cherishing bosom of the earth."

Lohengrin did not wish to be looked up to and admired by the woman whom he went to seek, for whose deliverance he had been sent; he wished to be loved by her. This love was not to consist of a trembling adoration of a higher being, but was to be experienced in the inmost heart; it was to rest upon a truer, more intelligent devotion. For this it was necessary that Lohengrin should conceal his higher origin. For himself alone was Elsa to love him; nor must she ask who he was or whence he came:

> Ne'er venture to inquire,
> Nor proof from me desire,
> Whence I my journey trace,
> And what's my name and race!*

"Thus he desired the woman,—thus the human heart." Upon Elsa's cry for help, which echoed up from the midst of humanity to his dreary isolation, he came to her aid, and saw in her the woman for whom he craved. Confidingly she gave herself up to her brave hero:

> Take me! Hero, saviour mine!
> All that I am deem thou as thine!†

But soon jealousy and envy set to work, and awaken doubt and suspicion in the soul of the beloved woman. He perceives that she adores but does not understand him. The confession of his origin is forced from him, and he is compelled to return, crushed in spirit, to the dreariness of his isolation.

This is the story of Lohengrin, of which Wagner says:

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* Nie sollst du mich befragen,
Noch Wissens Sorge tragen,
Woher ich kam der Fahrt,
Noch wie mein Nam' und Art!

† Mein Held, mein Retter! Nimm mich hin!
Dir gieb ich alles, was ich bin!

"In the character and the plight of this Lohengrin I now recognise unmistakably the symbol of the only tragic material, the only tragic element, in fact, of modern life." *

He himself felt this tragedy in his inmost soul on the lonely height upon which he stood, and where he was consumed by ardent longing. "Here at last I hit the chief point of what is tragic in the situation of the true artist toward the life of the present time—the same situation, in truth, which received from me in Lohengrin its artistic shape. The most necessary and most natural craving of such an artist is, to be unreservedly accepted and understood by the feeling; and the impossibility, caused by our modern artistic life, of finding this feeling in such a state of ingenuousness and undoubting trust as he asked—to be understood; the necessity of having to communicate himself almost wholly to the critical understanding only, instead of to the feelings —this is indeed the first tragical element of his situation. As an artistic person I had to feel this, and it was destined to affect me in the course of my further development to such a degree that I finally broke out in open rebellion against the pressure of this situation." †

Wagner describes how, during the elaboration of the material, the true nature of Elsa came more and more clearly before his mind's eye. He saw in her not a woman filled with curiosity or jealousy, but "the longed-for complement of Lohengrin," which blended with him into one whole, the "other part of his own nature." "Elsa is the unconscious, involuntary element in which the conscious, voluntary nature of Lohengrin longs to dissolve itself." The involuntary impulse, the motive force of his own efforts and creations, Wagner recognised in this Elsa, before whom "manly egoism even in its noblest shape had effaced itself totally." "Elsa, the woman—the woman whom hitherto I had not under-

* *Ibid.*, iv, p. 363. † *Ibid.*, iv, p. 365.

stood, but whom now I knew—this most necessary incarnation of the purest sentient involuntariness—has converted me into a perfect revolutionist. She was the spirit of the people, the spirit in which I as an artistic person also longed for my freedom." *

The home that had been yearned for in the Flying Dutchman, Wagner had failed to find. He felt a stranger and alone among those that did not comprehend him. His ideal sense perceived everywhere the limitations of the human mind by external circumstances, traditional usages, and convention, and nowhere did he see that free man who stood high above the trifling manœuvres of modern life, and for whom he craved with a glowing desire.

While in this state of mind he joined—I might say in an ingenuous manner—the revolution, as he hoped to see his ideal realized thereby. Thus he says: "From the degrading yoke of slavery, of general handicraftship, with its pale soul of money, we will soar up to a free artistic humanity with its bright universal soul; from wretched, burdened day-labourers, we will all become beautiful, strong men, to whom the world belongs as an eternal, inexhaustible source of highest artistic enjoyment." †

His rebellion was not directed against a governing power but against a culture that had gone astray; his wrath was not a political but a purely human matter which had been developed by his individual artistic nature. When he had to fly in consequence of his share in the uprising, he said, therefore: "With nothing can I compare the agreeable sensation which, after I had surmounted the first grievous impressions, pervaded me when I felt myself free—free of the world's tormenting, always unfulfilled wishes, free from the relations in which these wishes had been my only consuming nourishment! Since no consideration any longer bound

* *Ibid.*, iv, p. 369. † Art and Revolution, *ibid.*, iii, p. 38.

me, the outlaw and fugitive, to any falsehood of any kind whatsoever; since I had thrown behind me every hope, every expectation from this now triumphant world, and could publicly and openly shout to it, with the most unconstrained candidness, that I, the artist, scorned it from the very bottom of my heart—this world so hypocritical and apprehensive of art and culture; since I could say to it that not a drop of really artistic blood flowed in any part of its vital veins, that it was incapable of pouring out a breath of human civilization, a whiff of human beauty—I felt myself for the first time in my life thoroughly and truly free, light, and happy, even though I might not know where next day I should hide myself that I might breathe the air of heaven." *

While Wagner's artistic creations had hitherto sprung from one single mood, one special situation in life, he was now impelled, as in the course of time all his sensations and views had assumed a more and more comprehensible form, to give to this inner life, these thoughts and feelings, artistic form in a great work of art. To the idea which chiefly filled him, the yearning after the free man who had raised himself above culture and civilization, he had given expression in his writings in the most various ways. Thus he says in Art and Revolution: † "Nature, human nature, will lay down the law to the two sisters—culture and civilization: So far as I am comprehended in you, shall you live and bloom; so far as I am not in you, shall you die and wither!" In another passage he says: "The real man will therefore not come until his life is formed and governed according to true human nature, and not by arbitrary political laws." ‡ In Art and Climate he says: "There is no higher power than that of the communistic man; there is nothing more lovable than communistic man. Only by the highest power of love do we, however, attain to true freedom, for

* *Ibid.*, iv, p. 406. † *Ibid.*, iii, p. 39. ‡ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 56.

there is no true freedom except that which is common to all men." *

At the time of the Revolution Wagner had already plunged into the study of German mythology, by which he felt specially attracted. He says: "In the effort to give artistic form to the desires of my heart, and in the course of my earnest investigation as to what attracted me so irresistibly to the original source of the legends, I advanced step by step deeper into that antiquity where I was finally to find, to my unutterable joy, and that, too, right in the highest antiquity, the youthful, beautiful man in the strongest freshness of his power. My studies in this way led me through the poems of the Middle Ages to the very foundation of ancient German mythology; one vesture after the other, which later poetry had thrown around it to its disfigurement, I was able to sever from it so as finally to see it in its chastest beauty. What I here saw was no longer the historical conventional figure, whereof the vesture more than the real form must interest us, but the real fundamental man, in whom I was able to recognise every pulsation of the blood, every twitch of the strong muscles, in unconfined freedom—in short, the true man." †

This "true, free man" it was who hovered before him as the ideal after which he yearned. He was filled with an internal impulse to the artistic realization of the "purely human being, free from all conventionality." In Siegfried he had found this ideal: "Elsa had taught me to find this man; he was to me the manly incorporation of the eternal involuntariness, of the doer of real deeds, of the human being in the fulness of highest, most direct power, and most undoubted worthiness of love."

If, in spite of Wagner's unmistakable explanations, even his earlier works were so entirely misunderstood, in which

* *Ibid.*, iii, p. 266. † *Ibid.*, iv, p. 381.

only single moods were treated, how much more likely was his greatest work, into which he entered with all his soul, in which he incorporated artistically his view of the world, to give occasion to misunderstandings! If, therefore, I discuss this work at greater length, I can only point in excuse to the fact that, as we shall see later on, mistakes and false conceptions have given rise to the most momentous results. Let us therefore proceed to a consideration of the trilogy of the Ring of the Nibelungs.

The first scene of the Rhinegold shows us the three Daughters of the Rhine in harmless, playful sport at the bottom of the river. Alberich approaches them in a wild passion of sensual love. He tries to overpower them. When one escapes him he pursues the others. It is all the same to him which one he overtakes, and that one always appears to him to be the most beautiful whom he happens to hold in his embrace. In him we see the representative of that sensuality which forms the antithesis to ideal, unselfish love. While he is thus engaged in pursuing the Daughters of the Rhine, the gold glitters with a strong light and delights with its splendour the Daughters of the Rhine, who artlessly hail it. Alberich stands blinded in amazed embarrassment, and listens to the proclaiming words of the Daughters of the Rhine:

He gains the world
As his own inheritance,
Who from the Rhinegold
Creates the ring
Which measureless might doth bestow. *

It is not in every one's power, however, to accomplish this miracle:

* Der Welt Erbe
Gewänne zu eigen
Wer aus dem Rheingold
Schüfe den Ring,
Der masslose Macht ihm verlieh.

Only who Love's might
Doth withstand,
Only who Love's joys
Drives away,
None but he gets the secret power
The gold to force into a ring. *

Now, what is the meaning of this ring, which thus bestows "measureless might"—nay, the command of the world? In it we must see the sensuous rendering of that world from which Tannhäuser yearned to escape, from which he was saved by Elisabeth—the world of sensual enjoyment, the striving after outward fame and splendour, the all-constraining, world-ruling power of gold. That the love which he must renounce who longed to forge this ring, is not sexual love, is indicated by the fact that Alberich had a son, Hagen; it is, on the contrary, that ideal, unselfish impulse, that self-sacrificing love—Elisabeth.

The incarnation of sensuality, Alberich, cursed this love, stole the gold, forged the ring, and won by its means that measureless might which made him ruler of the world. Everybody had to create and work for him; his insatiable cupidity craved ever new treasures and wealth; even his own brother he held in a "degrading yoke of slavery," and compelled him to make that wonderful piece of work, the Tarnhelm. †

After the ring and the hoard had been stolen from him, Alberich cursed the gold:

No joy shall please
Him who it holds;

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* Nur wer der Minne
Macht versagt,
Nur wer der Liebe
Lust verjagt,
Nur der erzielt sich den Zauber,
Zum Reif zu zwingen das Gold.

† Or "mist-hood," a garment that rendered the wearer invisible and gave him the strength of twelve men.—TRANSLATOR.

Upon no favourite of fortune shall shine
Its brilliant light;
Who it doth own
Let care devour,
And who has it not,
Let envy gnaw!
All shall strive
For what it brings,
Yet none joy shall reap
Though it is used.*

This curse weighed upon the gold from this time on, and brought death and ruin on those who possessed it.

The central figure of the whole action, in which all that is tragic in the drama is realized, is the mighty form of the all-governing god Wotan, the father of gods and men. Wagner writes in an article:† "In my conception of the Ring of the Nibelung I had, unknown to myself, confessed the truth relative to human affairs. Everything here is thoroughly tragic, and the will which would form a world after its wish, can finally attain nothing more satisfactory than its own dignified destruction." This will, bereft of freedom and conditioned and bound down by circumstances, is Wotan. He feels the mighty power within him, yet can not put it forth. He is bound by stipulations; he must resist his desire.

In contradistinction to him, the restless, forward-pressing

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* Kein Froher soll
Seiner sich freu'n;
Keinem Glücklichen lache
Sein lichter Glanz;
Wer ihn besitzt,
Den sehre sorge,
Und wer ihn nicht hat,
Nage der Neid!
Jeder giere
Nach seinem Gut,
Doch keiner geniesse
Mit Nutzen sein.

† On the State and Religion, *ibid.*, viii, p. 11.

will which always strives after new aims while it denies itself, stands Erda, the representative of intellectual knowledge. We meet her first in Rhinegold, when Wotan deliberates as to whether he shall deliver up the world-governing ring in order to recover the stolen Freia:

> How all was, I know,
> How all is,
> How all will be,
> I see too:
> Th' eternal world
> Ur-Wala,
> Erda puts in your mind.*

Erda, true knowledge, sleeps, and in her place watches Fricka, Wotan's spouse. In her we have to see the representative of right based upon pure convention. She protects the right, not because of its intrinsic value, or because she has recognised it as such, but because it exists and is designated as right. She sticks to the letter, and law and custom are the motives which alone determine her. The deeper emotions of heart and feeling out of which true right proceeds are strange to her; she is personified externality, purely arbitrary formality.

The second scene of Rhinegold discloses to us Walhalla, the mighty burg of the gods, raising heavenward its shining battlements. It signifies the irresistible will power, the struggle for endless fame. Fricka is anxious and terror-stricken at sight of the burg. As representative of the law, of strict right, she first of all bethinks herself of the bargain that has been made, and of the stipulated reward:

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* Wie Alles war, weiss ich,
Wie Alles wird,
Wie Alles sein wird
Seh' ich auch:
Der ew'gen Welt
Ur-Wala,
Erda mahnt deinen Mut.

Ready is the burg,
The pledge forfeited:
Dost thou forget what thou didst give?*

To the restless, onward striving will the bargain suggests no cause for anxiety. Wotan rejoices at the sight of the mighty citadel; he breaks the concluded agreement by which he rules the world, but has to atone for his guilt, since his will is fettered, bound by law and custom.

To the giants who built the burg, Wotan had promised Freia as a reward. Fasolt and Faffner now approach to claim their reward, the building of the burg being completed. Freia is the refreshing ideal, that "artistic humanity with its bright universal soul," that love which Alberich had cursed—the unselfish love of human being for human being. The partaking of her apples, which she proffers to the gods, gives them everlasting youthful energy. But if they are withheld from them they shall wither in joyless, fameless old age. Wotan now recognises his mistake in sacrificing Freia, and refuses the reward: "I will not sell Freia."

While the giants persist in claiming the reward for which they had bargained, Loge approaches, the representative of cunning, stratagem, and untruth, who had advised the agreement. Very characteristic of the signification of Freia and of the Rhinegold is Loge's account of how he sought to replace Freia and finally discovered the Rhinegold.

Loge's narrative arouses the cupidity of the giants. They are ready to renounce Freia if the Rhinegold is given them in her stead. Very characteristic of the difference between the Rhinegold and Freia is the scene in which Fasolt and Faffner exchange her for the hoard. Even the "awkward giants," the "rude clowns," the representatives of the

* Die Burg ist fertig,
Verfallen das Pfand:
Vergisst Du, was Du vergabst?

coarsest materialism, the rough-hewn opposites of delicate feeling—even they will not sever themselves from the ravishing woman.

To lose the woman,
Be sure, will grieve me sorely:
If then she from my sight must go,
The hoard of metal
Must so be heaped
That from my eyes
It wholly the fair one conceals!*

With gold he will bury the gentlest higher emotion of the heart:

Alas, still shines
Her glance on me,
Her eye's bright star
Still lights my way:
Through a small crevice
I must her spy!—
Do I see the dear delicious eyes.
I can not leave this woman fair. †

So soon as the giants have gained possession of the hoard, the Tarnhelm, and the ring, the curse of Alberich becomes fulfilled. Beset by jealousy and envy, they fall to quarreling, and Fasolt slays Faffner, his own brother. While the possession of the gold aroused in Alberich primarily lust

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* Das Weib zu missen,
Wisse gemutet mich weh:
Soll aus dem Sinn sie mir schwinden,
Des Geschmeides Hort
Häufe denn so,
Dass meinem Blick
Die blühende ganz er verdeck'!

† Weh' noch blitzt
Ihr Blick zu mir her,
Des Auges stern
Strahlt mich noch an:
Durch eine spalte,
Muss ich's erspäh'n!—
Seh' ich dies wonnige Auge,
Von dem Weibe lass' ich nicht ab.

of power, it manifests itself in Faffner's case as the mere naked desire for possession itself. He does not know the value and the power of what he possesses; he finds delight merely in the fact that he possesses it. Through dread that some of it may be stolen from him, he drags his possession to a cavern, metamorphoses himself by means of the Tarnhelm into a mighty dragon, and there looks after his treasure in idle repose. "I lie and hold possession, let me repose," are Faffner's words. If we look around us in our modern world for Faffners, who seek to possess merely for the sake of possessing, it will not prove a very difficult task for us to discover a whole series of them.

The second part of the drama, the Walkyry, represents the hot struggle between Wotan, the mighty will which struggles for freedom, and Fricka, the incarnation of inflexible law, convention, and custom. Wotan recognises the bondage of his will, the impossibility of unfolding himself freely and unhampered:

> I who by pact am a lord,
> To the selfsame pact am now slave. *

Eternal knowledge, Erda, had predicted his destruction, "an ignominious end of the eternal." He must fear Alberich. Should he ever be successful in acquiring the ring,

> Then would Walhall be lost:
> Who love did imprecate
> He alone
> With envy would use
> The runes of the ring
> Giving the noble
> Infinite grief. †

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* Der durch Verträge ich Herr,
Den Verträgen bin ich nun Knecht.

† Dann wäre Walhall verloren:
Der der Liebe fluchte
Er allein

To defy the foe, to shield himself and Walhalla, Wotan sent out the Walkyries to bring heroes, who should fight for him. The Walkyries, Wotan's daughters, formed a portion of his personality. They formed the wish for liberty; they were hostile to Fricka—hostile to her right. Their origin "in wild love" of itself denotes their opposition to convention and custom.

But Fricka still reigns. The Walkyries form only a part of Wotan; the agreements that bind him they are unable to break. They, too, must submit to Fricka's will.

Wotan is aware that only a free hero, one who starts up boldly and unhampered, will be able to defy the foe. Through such a hero he had hoped to attain what he wished. He betook himself to a noble stock which itself had sprung from him—the Wälsung. He had thrust a sacred sword into the trunk of an ash tree in such a way that only the strongest hero should be able to withdraw it. Siegmund, the Wälsung, the brave hero, he himself stimulated to the deed. Siegmund felt in himself the impulse to freedom; unhampered did his defiant spirit unfold itself. Then he found Sieglinde, his own sister, in the enemy's house, married without love, courted without affection by Hunding. The deepest love was kindled in the young pair; custom and law failed to separate them; they followed solely the true human feeling which moved the inmost recesses of their hearts.

How wrongly has this love between Siegmund and Sieglinde been interpreted! After what has been said before, it requires no further explanation that here, as in all of Wagner's creations, love is merely the symbolical expression of certain sensations; that it was in no way Wagner's purpose

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Nützte neidisch
Des Ringen Runen
Zu aller Edlen
Endloser schmach.

to glorify in this relationship the impulse of sensual love or the like, but that the myth was only made use of in an ingenious way to incorporate artistically that already discussed antithesis, unfettered human freedom and right based upon custom and convention.

Fricka, the inflexible law which deviates not from the path of tradition, the conventional form, the personified externality, is horrified at this unequalled delinquency. Wotan, the will that strives for freedom, can not see anything wrong, any misdeed in the act:

> What deed so bad
> Have these twain done,
> Whom spring united in love?
> 'Twas affection's charm
> Enraptured them;
> Why should I blame affection's might? *

Then he continues:

> Thou see'st but one thing,
> I another see,
> And the first is driven from my sight. †

They are antagonistic principles—the right that is formed by virtue of interest and convention, and the right that is based upon a truer, more purely human experience. The sharply antagonistic elements which are here dealt with, and are so sharply opposed, one might specially refer to the

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* Was so schlimmes
Schuf das Paar,
Das liebend einte der Lenz?
Der Minne Zauber
Entzückte sie,
Wer büsst mir der Minne Macht?

† Du siehst nur das Eine,
Das And're seh' ich,
Das Jenes mir jagt aus dem Blick.

These words are taken from the original draft of the text, as it had been planned before the scene was written.

moral sphere, and call illegal morality and legal immorality.

Wotan then proceeds:

> Unholy
> Deem I the oath
> Which without love unites;
> And of me in truth
> Do not require
> That by force I hold
> What doth not cling to thee.
> For where bold powers themselves array,
> I must counsel open war. *

Fricka knows full well that she must regard the strong, free hero as her foe; that his triumph means her fall, her destruction, and she therefore demands of Wotan that he will deny him his countenance. She gains the day in this struggle with Wotan, and the latter is compelled to resolve upon Siegmund's end. He has to give up his own yearning; he has to will against his wish:

> In my own fetters
> Am I caught:
> I, the least free of all! †

Such is Wotan's plaint to Brünhilde, his and Erda's daughter.

In her, the daughter of Will and Knowledge, Wotan sees

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* Unheilig
Acht' ich den Eid,
Der Unliebende eint;
Und mir wahrlich
Mute nicht zu,
Dass mit Zwang ich halte,
Was Dir nicht haftet:
Denn wo kühn Kräfte sich regen,
Da rath' ich offen zum Krieg.

† In eig'ner Fessel
Fing ich mich:
Ich unfreiester Aller!

his own will, formed through knowledge, whose free unfolding, however, he fears.

Wotan recognises that in Siegmund he merely sees himself, his own sword, his own energy, and he therefore determines upon Siegmund's death.

Brünhilde, the daughter of Knowledge, knows that Sieglinde bears already under her heart the greatest hero:

> Thy wife trust to me
> On account of the pledge,
> Which blissful from thee she received.*

In her is kindled the struggle between Knowledge and Will; the latter gets worsted, and she determines to save Siegmund against the will of Wotan. The fettered will, Wotan, has to will against his own wish, he has to destroy with his own hand Siegmund, whom he loves. Against Wotan's spear, marked with the runes of the contract, his sword breaks, and Siegmund falls.

Wotan's wrath, however, is only greater, his passion more headstrong, his fury more savage at the disobedience of Brünhilde; for he feels only more deeply his own bondage, his own weakness and impotency.

Thus Wotan casts off his child. But his heart is softened and appeased by the prayers of the "brave, noble child." He will not yield her up as a prize "to the most cowardly man for an easy booty":

> A true bridal fire
> Shall burn now for thee,
> As ne er hitherto for bride it has burned!
> Let flaming glow
> Warm the rock around;
> With consuming terror
> Let it cowards scare;

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* Befiehl mir dein Weib
Um des Pfandes Willen,
Das wonnig von Dir es empfing.

Let faint heart avoid
Brünhilde's rock:
For one alone woos the bride,
Who is freer than I, the god! *

Brünhilde, Wotan's glorious child, pure, unalloyed, genuine Knowledge, is sunk in a deep sleep and awaits the strong, free hero, who, uninfluenced by law and custom, free from human tradition, guided only by internal impulse to eternal perception and true beauty, shall come to awaken her.

Wotan, however, the fettered will, the denial of the will to live, resolves upon his end:

Depart, then,
Imperious pride,
Of divine splendour
Braggart disgrace!,
Break all together,
What I have built!
My work I renounce;
There's but one thing still left:
The end — —
The end! — †

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* Ein bräutliches Feuer
Soll Dir nun brennen,
Wie nie einer Braut es gebrannt!
Flammende Glut
Umglühe den Fels;
Mit zehrenden Schrecken
Scheuch es den Zagen;
Der Feige fliehe
Brünhilde's Fels:
Denn einer nur freie die Braut,
Der freier als ich der Gott!

† Fahre denn hin,
Herrische Pracht,
Göttlichen Prunkes
Prahlende Schmach!
Zusammenbreche,
Was ich gebaut!
Auf geb' ich mein Werk,
Eines nur will ich noch:
Das Ende — —
Das Ende! —

At this point the tragic element of the drama reaches its climax; "the will, which would form a world after its own wish," finds a fitting destruction. But the world of the artist could not at the same time attain to a close. Borne on the wings of an artistic and enthusiastic fantasy, the artist soars in majestic flight to a height never foreseen. There he has seen it—the daring, free being "with the bright universal soul"; he has felt it, felt it deeply. In it Wagner saw the human ideal. It is the free, uninfluenced human being who acts according to the circumstances of this world without being influenced or impelled from without, whose actions are not conditioned by custom and convention, but who strives after what is highest and noblest from free inward stimulus. He only acts according to the dictates of his pure discernment, his true knowledge, and his stronger will is able to triumph over all the obstructions of the world.

Woton had longed for this hero when he said to Brünhilde:

But one has the power,
Which I ne'er had:
A knight, whom to help
I never inclined;
Strange to the god,
Free from his grace,
Unconsciously,
Without command,
From his own need
With his own weapon
Performed the act,
Which I have to fear,
'Gainst which I gave no warning,
My only wish e'en wished it.*

* Nur einer dürfte,
Was ich nicht darf:
Ein Held dem helfend
Nie ich mich neigte;
Der fremd dem Gotte,
Frei seiner Gunst,

Siegfried was the brave, happy hero, "the real original, human being in whom every pulsation of the blood, every twitch of the energetic muscles, was to be recognised in unconfined, fresh action"—the true, free human being. The myth, which makes him one of twins, is here symbolically and poetically turned to account; even his origin points to absolute freedom from custom and convention. Siegfried instinctively recognises in Mime the enemy, the traitor. In the latter we see incorporated the lowest human passions—envy, jealousy, and crudest egoism.

For Siegfried, the strong youth, no glaive was destined, as had been the father's case. By his own strength he must form it, weld together the strong pieces of the divine glaive. The free man who is independent of conventional morality can, of course, know no fear. He alone has the courage and strength and activity to mount to the most beautiful ideal, to true human freedom. The forging of the sword is accomplished by Siegfried after a fashion quite counter to custom and in violation of every ancient rule of the craft, and his success greatly amazes Mime. The character traits with whose representatives, Mime and Faffner, we have made acquaintance, must disappear with the appearance of the ideal free man. Hence, in the drama, both are destroyed by Siegfried. With Nothung, the wonderful glaive, he slays the evil dragon before the grudge hole (Neidhöhle). The hoard of the Niebelung, and with it the Tarnhelm and the ring, now belong to Siegfried. He regards them, however, as useless toys, and does not

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Unbewusst,
Ohne Geheiss,
Aus eig'ner Not
Mit der eig'nen Wehr
Schüfe die That,
Die ich scheuen muss,
Die nie mein Rat ihm entriet,
Wünscht sich auch einzig mein Wunsch.

trouble himself about the properties of that which he possesses:

> What use you are to me
> I do not know.*

The beautiful, strong, free man, who is artistically embodied in Siegfried, seeks in his inner worth alone happiness and contentment, not in the heaping up of external riches and goods.

Siegfried now strides away to the mount that no craven can approach without being consumed by the blazing fire. His actions are determined solely by his own will, which strives continually after what is noble. The restraint of compacts is foreign to him. He does not, therefore, bow to the spear of Wotan marked with runes of compact, which is held in his way, and against which the glaive of the father was shattered. Wotan is not able to withstand his might; he shivers the holy spear with Nothung, his glaive welded by his own strength. All hindrances, even the ocean of fire, must yield to his power and his will. So the hero, who "fears not the point of the spear," advances, strides through the fire, his strength quenching the flaming glow, and approaches Brünhilde to awaken her from her long, inactive sleep. The beautiful, strong, free man, whom the artist sees in radiant light, awakens the world from long sleep. True knowledge, pure cognition awakens humanity to holy bliss. In self-forgetting and self-surrendering love Brünhilde demands of her lover that he leave her, and that he go out into the wide world to perform new and lordly deeds.

We now see the strong, free man in connection with the bad world, surrounded by plots and jealousy, envy and malice. In Hagen we recognise the representative of those properties for which Mime and Alberich previously stood.

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* Was ihr mir nützet
Weiss ich nicht.

He is the antithesis of Siegfried, and his nature is shown by his descent. While Siegfried is the issue of a fiery *liaison* of love contrary to conventional law, Hagen, the son of Alberich, owes his existence to a love bought with gold. Hagen says of himself:

My blood would spoil your drink;
It flows not genuine
And noble as yours,
Stubborn and cold
It curdles in me;
My cheek will not blush,
Wherefore I remain far
From the fiery bond.*

Siegfried, in his intercourse with the bad world, acts solely in conformity with his inner feelings. He believes everybody with whom he comes into contact open and true like himself. Hence all distrust is foreign to him, and he acts as the moment suggests. This is the signification of the drink of forgetfulness. Such a naïve, trustful behaviour must in the wicked world lead to ruin and destruction. Reflection, cunning calculation, and accurate recognition of the wickedness of others are the weapons necessary to self-assertion in the world. Thus Siegfried falls a sacrifice to hate, cupidity, and envy. He, to whom the slightest false motion of the heart is an impossibility, and whose soul is of divine peerage and noblest purity, becomes in the eyes of the world a criminal. He is accused of perjury, adultery, fraud, and treason, and intrigue is able to prove its charges and to require punishment therefor. But the true knowledge—the

* Mein Blut verdärb euch den Trank;
Nicht fliesst mir's echt
Und edel wie euch,
Störrisch und kalt
Stockt's in mir;
Nicht will's die Wange mir röten,
Drum bleib' ich fern
Vom feurigen Bund.

knowledge which, standing without the world, is conditioned by nothing—Brünhilde recognises the eternal and celestial faithfulness of him she loves.

Truer than he
Swore no man oath;
More loyally than he
Held no man his pacts;
Purer than he
Loved never another.*

The ring, laden with the curse of the Nibelung, is restored by Brünhilde to the daughters of the Rhine. The Walhalla, with the old world of gods, collapses; but Brünhilde, in radiant accoutrement, bears Siegfried on high upon Grane, the courageous steed. The strife for outward glitter and display, for riches and possessions, ceases. The world, which had been governed by a will bound down to conventional ideas, collapses; and in its stead the true, free will, bound to nothing, but associated with pure knowledge and true recognition, is lord over all.

No more than Wagner intended in his Tannhäuser to teach "a specifically Christian, impotently heaven-expecting moral," did he in Parsifal, his last artistic creation, have specifically religious ideas in view. Parsifal has rightly been called a continuation of the Nibelungen trilogy. That free hero, who in the trilogy must be overthrown in combating the wicked world, but whose final victory is there only intimated, becomes in Parsifal the real saviour of humanity.

The wardens of the Holy Grail—the sensuous emblem of the highest, holiest good of humanity, the human ideal, the

* Echter als er
Schwur keiner Eide;
Treuer als er
Hielt keiner Vorträge;
Laut'rer als er
Liebte kein and'rer.

renunciation of the sensual life, greedy for wealth, fame, and pleasure—were the knights of the Grail, who in the holy grove in the Gralsburg, or Grail castle, far from the ignoble impulses of the world, were dedicated to the service of the Holy Grail. A pure cup of crystal containing the blood of Christ was intrusted to the care of Amfortas, the king of the Grail knights. Klingsor, the representative of the element hostile to the ideal—that is, of selfishness and lust of power—himself aspired to the possession of the Holy Grail, not on account of its ideal graciousness, but from self-interest and cupidity. But it was granted to the pure alone to find the path to the relic:

> Ye, who their service have attained to
> By paths no sinners ever gained to,
> Ye know 'tis but permitted
> The pure to be admitted
> 'Mid those the Grail's divinely magic power
> With strength for pious work doth dower.*

Klingsor, conscious of his incapacity to become the master of sinful temptations, mutilated himself and so sought to obtain the Grail:

> Unable in himself to stifle thoughts of evil,
> Quickly turned he his guilty hand,
> Resolved to gain the Grail's command,
> But scornfully was by its guardian spurned.†

Repulsed by Amfortas, Klingsor built a mighty enchanted palace in the neighbourhood of the Holy Grail

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* Die seinem Dienst ihr zugesindet
Auf Pfaden, die kein Sünder findet
Ihr wisst, dass nur dem Reinen
Vergönnt ist, sich zu einen,
Den Brüdern, die zu höchsten Rettungswerken
Des Grales heil'ge Wunderkräfte stärken.

† Ohnmächtig, in sich selbst die Sünde zu ertöten,
An sich legt er die Frevlerhand,
Die nun dem Grale zugewandt,
Verachtungsvoll dess' Hüter von sich stiess.

castle, whither he knew how to decoy the knights of the Grail, and they fell sacrifices to the seductions of sensuality.

It left Amfortas no peace. He himself sallied forth to fight the wicked enemy and to free the knights from the danger, whereupon he himself fell a victim to the seductions of the crafty one:

> While near the walls from us the king was taken,
> A woman fair as sin has turned his brain;
> He lay in transport her enfolding—
> The spear escaped his holding;
> A deathly cry! I rushed anigh:—
> But laughing, Klingsor fled before,
> The sacred spear with him he bore.*

That holy spear, with which Amfortas might have conquered the enchanter without trouble, had once shed the blood of Christ. The spear and that holy vessel, the most precious possession of all, had been conveyed by angels to Amfortas's father, the pious Titurel. They were to be guarded in the holy castle as the holiest of holies—the highest ideals of humanity. Now Klingsor had succeeded in purloining the holy spear, and with it had inflicted upon Amfortas a bad wound, which was never to be healed:

> That wound it is, which none may make to close.

Klingsor, being in possession of the mighty and holy weapon, hoped to exterminate the entire race of knights, and to get the Holy Grail as well. Sinful humanity, which found poetic shape in Kundry, is without will power in the hands of the mighty Klingsor, in the grasp of unconquerable passions. Kundry must do evil against her wish, against her

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* Schon nah dem Schloss wird uns der Held entrückt,
Ein furchtbar schönes Weib hat ihn entzückt;
In seinen Armen liegt er trunken,
Der Speer ist ihm entsunken;
Ein Todesschrei!—ich stürm' herbei:—
Von dannen Klingsor schwand,
Den heil'gen Speer hat er entwandt.

will. She certainly felt within her an impulse to unselfish conduct, and sought in constant self-sacrifice to throw off the burden of her selfish propensities; but, driven as by demoniac power, she is not mistress of her will. When, struggling with herself, she cries out, "I will not!" Klingsor answers:

Well wilt thou, for thou must.*

The sight of the Holy Grail gives rejuvenated life and renewed strength to all that are noble and pure; but that which refreshes and quickens others fills him who is condemned to guard it with ineffable agony. The pains of the frightful wound are by the holy lustre exacerbated to insufferable torments; the conscience laden with guilt can not bear the contemplation of the highest ideal. In vain Amfortas seeks means for the alleviation of his pain, for relief from his torments. There came to him one comforting prophecy of the Grail:

Before the plundered sanctuary
In pray'r impassioned lay Amfortas,
Imploring for a sign of safety;
Heavenly radiance from the Grail then floated,
A sacred phantom face
From lips divine did chase
These words, whose purport clearly could be noted:
"By pity lightened,
The guileless fool,
Waits for him
My chosen tool." †

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* Wohl willst du, denn du musst.

† Vor dem verwaisten Heiligtum
In brünst'gem Beten lag Amfortas,
Ein Rettungszeichen heiss erflehend;
Ein sel'ger Schimmer da endfloss dem Grale;
Ein heilig Traumgesicht
Nun deutlich zu ihm spricht
Durch hell erschauter Wortezeichen Male:
"Durch Mitleid wissend
Der reine Thor,

The promised, long-desired redeeming hero, Parsifal, approached, "by pity knowing, the pure fool." Solitary, unskilled in arms, he was attracted to the far desert. As Siegfried had made his glaive, so had Parsifal himself made his bow. From his mother he went out into the world, and fighting made his way. Parsifal naïvely asks: "They threatened me; were they bad? Who is good?" He has not acquired the knowledge of good and evil, he can only experience them in the depths of his human soul, whence they can also resound pure and true, without being changed by the prejudice of a conventional right. His knowledge is neither erudite nor recondite, but results from the delicacy and candour of sense and of sentiment. He approaches the castle and is present when Amfortas uncovers the Holy Grail. He is deeply seized by all the pains and torments of the king; except that of the torment of guilt, which causes those sufferings, he as yet knows nothing. For that reason Gurnemanz indignantly pushes the "fool" out of the door, whereupon the latter wends his way to the enchanted palace of Klingsor. He strikes back with strong arm the knights who oppose him; and the enticements of the lovely maidens in the odorous flower garden fail to captivate him. Kundry approaches in the magical beauty wherewith she once seduced Amfortas himself, and tries under the ban of Klingsor all her arts upon the lad. She tells him of his mother, how she has died from love and care for him. Then occurs to him what he has undertaken with his life thus far. In overpowering pain he sinks at the feet of the seductive woman:

Woe's me! woe's me! What did I? Where was I?
Mother! Sweetest, dearest mother!
Thy son, thy son must be thy murderer?
O fool! Weak and frivolous fool!

Harre sein',
Den ich erkor."

Where couldst thou have been, thus to forget her?
Thus—ah! thus to forget thee,
Faithful, fondest of mothers!*

Kundry essays in this way to force an entry to his heart:

To thee now she sends
Benediction from above,
In this first kiss of love!†

But he starts up in horror, pressing his hand strongly against his heart:

Amfortas!
The spear wound! the spear wound!
In me I feel it burning.‡

Unspeakable sympathy with the torments of the king seizes him; he feels the pains as though they were his own. By them he knows and recognises the danger of seduction, which he stoutly withstands. The holy spear which Klingsor seizes as a last recourse and hurls at him remains hovering stationary over his head. Parsifal snatches it, and before the sign of the cross Klingsor's magical magnificence decays into nothing. "By pity lightened, the guileless fool" approaches with the holy spear to bring welfare and redemption. In the baptism of Kundry he purifies the world, which lies in the bondage of sensual pleasure, and in closing with the holy spear the wound of Amfortas, he frees the world from the torment of conscious guilt. The ideal

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* Wehe! Wehe! Was that ich? Wo, war ich?
Mutter: Süsse, holde Mutter!
Dein Sohn, dein Sohn musste dich morden?
O Thor! Blöder, taumelnder Thor!
Wo irrtest Du hin, ihrer vergessend?
Deiner, deiner vergessend,
Traute treuerste Mutter?

† Als Muttersegens letzten Gruss
Der Liebe—ersten Kuss!

‡ Amfortas!
Die Wunde!—die Wunde!
Sie brennt in meinem Herzen.

of humanity, the Holy Grail, which was for a long time secluded, is unveiled anew, with its radiant lustre reburnished, its glowing light imparting new life and strength to its reanimated knights.

In contrast to the "understanding that is due to fellow-feeling" stands the schematic, conventional knowledge based on tradition, sprung from no penetrating warm sympathy for humanity, but from the frigid letter and egoistic calculation that strives after an endless accumulation of stores of knowledge, losing sight of the end of wisdom, which is the welfare of mankind. In Wagner, the assistant of Faust, Goethe has scourged this aimless, egotistic, self-admiring knowledge, which pursues no common human good:

> To study's toil have I with zeal myself addressed.
> I do know much: would I might know the rest!

Faust, on the other hand, has come to see that true, serviceable knowledge must owe its origin to sympathy with mankind. He says:

> My bosom, of the science-itch now cured,
> Henceforth is closed to no pain that's endured;
> And what to all mankind is parcelled out
> I wish with my own heart to know about,
> The highest and the lowest Mine to keep,
> Every man's weal and woe upon Me heap,
> My private self to Man's great self expand,
> Though I be wrecked, great Man to understand.

With the exception of two, we have now briefly considered all of Wagner's music dramas. The two excepted are Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg and Tristan und Isolde. In the former he has humorously painted his own position in relation to modern art. The first idea of the latter occurred to him during the musical composition of the Nibelungen-Trilogy. It impelled him to paint in a drama of his

own the ideal unselfish love that he had studied in Siegfried and Brünhilde.

Thus Wagner's poems form a coherent chain, and each of them may well be termed "a fragment of a great confession." His moods and sentiments, vehemently pressing toward artistic embodiment, formed the spring from which his art productions sprang. Wagner repeatedly and expressly declares that his art is merely the mirror of his feelings, and must therefore be all but exclusively interpreted by heart and sentiment. Hence we find in Wagner that refinement and elaboration of the heart-life, those moods often inclining toward gloom, with which we have been familiarized by the study of the subjective poets, and in particular of Goethe. "Heaven-high exulting, to death cast down," was the temperament of Wagner likewise. How often he yearned after death, and believed his only rescue was to be found in it! Wagner reminds us of those tears that Goethe shed in reading Hermann und Dorothea, when he tells us how often "in hot tears" he lamented the unavoidable severance of Lohengrin from Elsa.* Art for Wagner was simply a means of expression. It was his tongue, in which he endeavoured to impart himself. Like Goethe, he laughed at the idea of being considered the founder of a "new school," or a "new departure," or a "new aim." More than once he poked sarcastic fun at the new "tendency" that was ascribed to him. In an essay on Opera-poetry, and in Particular on Opera-composition,† he says: "Not so much the study of my works as their success seems to have led many to follow my 'tendency.' What this consists of has remained a mystery to me. Perhaps of a long-continued preference for mediæval material. The Edda and the rude North, in general, were regarded as mines of 'good texts.' But the choice and character of the opera texts seem to be

* *Op. cit.*, iv, p. 368.

† *Op. cit.*, x, p. 224.

not the only important items of the alleged 'new departure'; much else enters into it, especially '*Durch Komponieren*,' and above all the uninterrupted interposition of the orchestra in the concerns of the singers, a practice which has been followed the more liberally as a good deal of 'departure' has arisen of late in the instrumentation, harmonization, and modulation of orchestral compositions." Interesting is Wagner's own description* of how music gradually became a mother tongue to him; of how, in composing, it could not at all be his purpose to invent beautiful and original melodies or harmonies, but how he simply expressed in this tongue what he had to say in the only way in which it could be expressed. The reader will recollect that, in the discussion of the psychology of genius, I adduced a saying of Goethe in which he gives us to understand how indispensable the gift of verse was to him, since he was governed by such manifold feelings and moods and could only find repose and satisfaction in giving them artistic shape. This impulse to give artistic shape to his sentiments was felt by Wagner in the same measure, but neither the nature of his art nor outward circumstances enabled him so easily to see his artistic creations embodied as those of the simple poet. A poem, even though its form be dramatic, is a completed artistic work as soon as it is on paper; but a piece of music, especially a musical drama, receives life and existence only when it comes to be performed. Let an artist look upon his art not as a means of gaining money and fame, but merely as a means of expressing his sentiments, and if the means of imparting them be taken from him, as was Wagner's case, owing to every imaginable obstacle being put in the way of the performance of his works, or, worse yet, and still more discouraging, if his works are arbitrarily altered and cut, and, owing to a defective understanding of them, per-

* *Op. cit.*, iv, p. 387.

formed quite disfigured, so that what was originally intended and felt is quite lost, then it will be quite psychologically conceivable that he should feel a just resentment and aversion toward those who, partly from want of understanding and partly from envy and ill will, deprive him of what to ordinary men is one of the highest of possessions—human speech.

In spite of all the obstacles placed in his path, Wagner did not let himself be subjugated by pain, because art held him erect. When he created his greatest work, the Ring of the Nibelungen, he did not himself believe that he should ever live to see it performed. It was not his purpose to gain fame and glory by it, but it afforded him satisfaction to unburden himself, as it were, by the artistic incorporation of his ideas, and at any rate to impart them to some friends, or even only to one. In such mood he wrote to Liszt: "What I am now creating shall never, or only under quite suitable circumstances, enter into life. Upon that I will henceforth unite all my force, and all my pride, and all my resignation. If I die before these works have been performed, I bequeath them to you, and if you die without their having attained a worthy performance, burn them. That is settled."

The impulse to communicate, in some way or other, with wider circles, as well as material need and cares, drove Wagner repeatedly into the literary career. Here it is, from a psychological point of view, of great interest for us to see how the artist fatigues himself in vain in debating, from a purely theoretical standpoint, the ideas that filled him, and how vainly he labours to make himself understood in a language which is wholly incapable of expressing his meaning; for the only language of artistic sentiment is art. Would Beethoven ever have been able to express the sentiments of the heroic symphony in words?

Whoever knows the writings of Wagner, especially his

larger works on Opera and Drama, The Art of the Future, etc., will be acquainted with his inflated and often unintelligible style; will have been offended by the many repetitions and apparent contradictions; and will, perhaps, have had the feeling that what the writer wished to communicate has actually been left unsaid. He did not consider himself by any means a writer, but wrote with great reluctance, driven by necessity; and he himself perfectly recognised the cause of his shortcomings. He knew that what he had to say could be expressed in one language only—the language of art. Wagner says: "Here again, and again and again, I have only been able to express myself through the channel of writing. What trouble this method of communication gives to me I need not assure those who know me as an artist. They can see themselves by the style of the literary works in which I torture myself to express what I could so tersely, easily, and gracefully render in art, so soon as its proper sensuous appearance stood as nearly in my power as its technical notation with pen on paper. But so odious to me is the whole literary business, and the necessity which has forced writing upon me, that I would that with this communication I might appear for the last time as a *littérateur* before my friends." *

It is not my task here to inquire what the value of Wagner's art may be, nor what rank he is destined to take in the history of art. For us, however, it is important to ascertain to what psychical processes his works owe their origin, and what psychical processes they produce.

The former question finds its solution in the foregoing considerations. The latter is an affair of observation and experience. This observation is, however, not always easy; it is sometimes decidedly difficult. The success of a work of art, the applause or disapprobation of the public, establishes but a very limited conclusion in regard to the mood called

* *Op. cit.*, iv, p. 401. See also Zukunftsmusik, vii, p. 153.

forth by it. Too many deceptive factors enter into the phenomenon, to permit us to trust to unconfirmed appearances. Experience teaches that only posterity, which allows the work of art to produce its effect unprejudiced and uninfluenced by personal considerations, is able to decide the question of the psychical effect. Along with this question posterity is judge of artistic value. Not theoretical reasons, not rules and statutes secure to a work of art enduring life, but solely its psychical effect. If the artist succeeds in exciting with his work in posterity the intended mood, its value is fixed. If we wish to-day to account to ourselves for the beauty of Beethoven's music, we find nothing more to say than that it is beautiful because we find it so. We do not ask the why and wherefore, but surrender ourselves, as Lohengrin desired Elsa to do, to 'love and pleasure, without inquiring for reasons.

We are to-day the beginning of Wagner's posterity. Now that the zealous flame of fanatical Wagnerianism has died out, and—at any rate in the younger generation—prejudices, personal motives, envy, and malice have passed away, the moods and sentiments that Wagner's music is able to excite come out more clearly, and it is these alone which are to give definitive judgment upon the value of this art.

Wagner himself tells us how he gradually learned to handle his art as his vernacular language, so as to communicate his sentiments without impediment. The public, too, has gradually to learn the language of the artist, and this it must do, not with the intellect, but with the heart and sentiment. This circumstance explains many things which will not escape the close external observer. Most persons who come to this art unprejudiced declare that the first impression of a given work is neutral or even repellent; but after frequent repetition the sentiment becomes greatly augmented, reaching, it may be, to high enthusiasm. But older persons, especially those who have grown up in another

definite art departure, can not readily habituate themselves to the "new departure." They are in the same situation in reference to it as they would be toward a new language, as compared with young persons and children.

Wagner, in his earlier works, was, so far as outward form goes, especially in a musical respect, very much under the influence of the art impressions under which he had grown up. Gradually and unconsciously his own temper gained greater and greater relative emphasis, until at last he was altogether free from external influence, and stood quite upon his own feet. But the further he departed from the land of tradition, the harder it necessarily became for the public to follow him and to learn the new language. Hence his earlier works, in spite of the antagonisms and difficulties which even they had to overcome, always had a better reception from the public, and were more understood, than his later compositions. Down to Lohengrin he was at all events followed; but his later works excited a veritable storm of indignation and opposition.

It is human nature to condemn whatever is not understood; and it is only at a late hour, and very often not at all, that the question occurs, Might not the cause of the want of understanding be our own incapacity? Had Wagner lived five hundred years earlier, he might very likely have been walled up alive or burned as bewitched. But in the nineteenth century, such proceedings being no longer matters of regular routine, the modern prescription for making everything clear that is not understood was applied, and Wagner was declared to be insane. The rubric was, "Tannhäuser and Lohengrin are very beautiful; but the later operas are crazy." Such was the language of the seventies.

Of course, such a diagnosis of insanity, based solely upon the fact that the subject had created works of art which were unintelligible to the public, was not a professional one. Nevertheless, the universal cry, "Wagner is insane!" was

destined to penetrate professional assemblies, until at last a "specialist in psychiatry" was found who from a scientific standpoint sought to demonstrate Wagner's insanity according to all the rules of the art. This "specialist in psychiatry," to use the designation which he expressly assumed, was Dr. Theodor Puschmann, who in the year 1873 published a work with this design.* He says: "This pamphlet is not intended to lead up to any preconceived doctrine. We are not allied to any party, and are not ranged either among the adherents or the opponents of Richard Wagner. We have never held any political or artistic relations with him whatever, and consider ourselves therefore able to preserve the perfect objectivity of our judgment, which is a prerequisite to all scientific investigation." This general proposition is quite unexceptionable; but is it a fact that Puschmann displays such objectivity of judgment? Has he limited himself to making out the psychical processes of Wagner's mind? Not at all. On the contrary, he judges of Wagner's works in a thoroughly subjective manner, as if he were the final court of appeal; and then, because Wagner's art finds no grace in his eyes, he concludes that Wagner is insane. In short, his procedure differs in but a single respect from that of a layman—namely, that he styles himself a "specialist in psychiatry." Thus he says: "Apart from some reminiscences of an earlier period, his later works bear the stamp of mental mediocrity, hurried imperfection, and a wild raggedness. The Meistersinger, Tristan und Isolde, Rheingold, etc., do not in the least attain that mental elevation, that inward nobility, which was effused upon his earlier works. In both matter and form, in words and music, they are unbeautiful, disjointed, and careless. The world has judged them with a correct instinct. While Lohengrin and Tannhäuser have won a place in the hearts of the people, his later works are

* Dr. Th. Puschmann, Practising Physician and Specialist in Psychology in Munich. Richard Wagner, eine psychiatrische Studie.

already buried before they have come to life." Is this what Dr. Puschmann calls "objectivity"? Is it the business of a "specialist in psychiatry" to render such a judgment as this upon a work of art?

In another place he says: "We have already mentioned above what poverty of ideas, what increasing mental desolation, Wagner has shown of late years. All that is beautiful and great in what he has ever accomplished was devised and completed before he reached the age of fifty. Since this time an impotent unproductivity has seized upon him. His genius is extinct, and has given place to a lamentable emptiness of mind. His wings are crippled; the heaven-storming genius has fallen from his shining pinnacle, and, like a poor, sick, pitiful bird, chattering senseless stuff not to be understood, picks up the dusty corns that he and others once rejected. . . . The long-forgotten ideas of his youth, fugitive sketches such as a gifted man often produces and as quickly tosses into the waste-basket as useless, are now raked out and set forth with a quantity of *baroque* peculiarities in words and music which snatch at originality. To these are added a brain-shattering instrumentation and the most horrible dissonances; so that, as a connoisseur says, ear nerves must be thick as cables to go through such noise undamaged and sound. Along with this is the most unheard-of prodigality of decoration and machinery, such as only the extravagant fancy of a madman rioting in transcendentalism could imagine. And all this Wagner, in his morbid delusion, declares to be such a work of art as never was, and exacts of the world that it consider this unnaturalness as genuine art, and insanity as genius." I will not "exact" of the respected reader to hear more of Puschmann's criticisms. I can only ask again, Is this the needful "objectivity" of the "specialist in psychiatry"? Every layman must see that the diagnosis of the mental condition of an artist has nothing to do with deciding whether his works are "good"

or "bad," and that the sole business of the psychiatrist is to ascertain the psychical processes by which those works have been produced. Supposing that Dr. Puschmann really were the court of last appeal in reference to the artistic value of Wagner's art, and the world had to submit to his judgment that the Meistersinger and Tristan und Isolde contain nothing but "brain-shattering noise" and "frightful dissonances," would this be a reason for a real psychiatrist to diagnose insanity?

Puschmann says: "In Tristan und Isolde we find so many reminiscences of Offenbach's Belle Hélène that we might presume an affinity of soul between the two authors." Had Herr Puschmann been a "specialist in psychiatry" in fact, and not merely upon the title-page of his pamphlet, he would have had no difficulty in conceiving the distinction between these two states of mind and soul. While we seek in vain in Puschmann's mode of passing judgment upon Wagner's artistic creations for his boasted "objectivity," we find that quality still more distinctly wanting in his mode of quoting Wagner's writings and his use of such quotations to support his assertions. Although he puts the passages between quotation marks, implying that they are given *verbatim et literatim* and that their genuineness is guaranteed, yet he alters both matter and form to suit himself. What is the name of such a proceeding in plain English? And what becomes of the "objectivity" of this "specialist in psychiatry"? Without going into details here, I refer the reader upon this point to a publication which gives the real and pretended passages from Wagner's writings in deadly parallels.*

I do not unearth Puschmann's pamphlet for the sake of refuting it, for refuted it has been to satiety for twenty years. Besides, it refutes itself by its contradictions and mendaci-

* Richard Wagner und der "Specialist der Psychiatrie." Eine Beleuchtung der Puschmannschen Studie von C. P. Berlin, 1873.

ties. But in considering the question of how far a diagnosis of insanity can properly be based upon a work of art, it lay in my way to show into what errors one might thus be betrayed, and to give an example of how a psychiatrist should not proceed. Puschmann collects a list of morbid symptoms which Wagner is said to have suddenly manifested, such as delusion of grandeur, delusion of persecution, moral insanity, and erotomania. There really is no disease in which such an abundance of symptoms is suddenly exhibited. But independently of that, the data upon which Puschmann rests his "symptoms" are based upon falsehood and error. A few examples may be given. Referring to the friendship between King Ludwig and Wagner, Puschmann says: "The man who was so admired did not use the power which a piece of good luck had afforded him to help his fellow-men to do any good, or to produce anything great. He did not justify the confidence of his royal patron, nor did he fulfil the hopes which the world of art had built upon his gifted youth. Sunk in the soft velvet of a palace *fauteuil*, he gave himself up to the enjoyment of a torpid repose. He basked comfortably in the adulation which the fame of his past procured for him, but created nothing more; at least, nothing of importance after Lohengrin was worthy of a great master." This assertion needs no commentary. Whoever is tolerably familiar with Wagner's life and works must see its utter falsity.

Wagner's "delusion of grandeur" is described by Puschmann in the following words: "Herr Wagner suffers from a self-conceit beyond all bounds and measure, a vanity and self-boasting truly morbid, which blind him to the merits of others, and allow him to regard himself as the sole embodied ideal of the loftiest wisdom and ability. The greatest masters of his art fade to nullity in his eyes; the illustrious musicians Mozart, Gluck, and others have no importance, nor title to mention in the history of culture,

except in so far as they may have served as his forerunners; and even the immortal Beethoven is, at best, nothing more than an easel upon which can be displayed the full-length portraiture of 'the greatest master of all the ages,' Richard Wagner." Whoever has even cast a glance into Wagner's writings must recognise the total falsity of this assertion. The masters mentioned—Beethoven, Mozart, and Gluck—had no more glowing and enthusiastic worshipper than Wagner. His candid veneration for them found such oft-repeated expression in his writings that one is amazed to find the very contrary opinion thus substituted for his. In Opera und Drama we read as follows: "And here I indicate to you again the masterly musician, in whom music was quite that which it is able to be in man, when quite in the fulness of its essentiality it is music and nothing else than music. Look at Mozart!" This is only one among numberless examples.

In another place Puschmann says: "But all this was not enough for his insatiable ambition. The world must kneel suppliant at his feet, and give him incense like a god." These are empty phrases with no basis of truth. This "specialist in psychiatry" rather incongruously interchanges "ambition" and "delusion of grandeur." But that is no excuse for ascribing to Wagner motives from which he was unusually exempt. Wagner did not wish to be "supplicated" or honoured as a higher being; he only desired to be understood. For that his soul thirsted—for understanding and sympathy. It would have sufficed to be understood by some few friends; to the world at large he was entirely indifferent. He wrote to Liszt: "I feel myself more than completely recompensed for all my endeavours, for my operas, and for my art wars, when I see what impression I have made by them upon you. To be thus completely understood was my sole desire. To be understood is the blissful satisfaction of my desire!" This

longing to be understood is so natural, and agrees so well with the psychological *cadre* of the artist, that the "specialist," who should know how to enter into the psychical processes of the artist, should certainly not take offence thereat. Equally justifiable and psychologically motived are the rancour and hatred of the artist for those who, partly from want of intelligence and partly from personal resentment, envy, and ill will, work to prevent his being understood.

Wagner's hatred for the Jews, which is set forth by Puschmann as a "delusion of persecution," rests simply upon the fact that Wagner saw in the Jews, especially those whose endeavours are limited to material gain, men who had renounced ideal love—in short, his Alberich. This feeling had no affinity with modern anti-Semitism; for, as can be seen in his letters to Liszt, along with "the Jews" he always named "the Philistines," as he called the Germans who slept away their lives in slothful dreams, and were glad if people did not disturb them—in short, the Faffners. To these two he often added the Jesuits. "Let us flee from this world, where there are nothing but Jews, Philistines, and Jesuits."

What Wagner longed for was the free, natural man, whose acts were not determined by petty personal interests and lower impulses, and whose life was not passed in thoughtless slumber—that is, Siegfried. There is no delusion of persecution here; it is only the artist's ideal. What characterizes the delusion of persecution is the circumstance that the patient everywhere scents persecutors, and in the most unreasonable and typical way regards the benefits that people do him as hostile persecutions. How grateful and happy, on the other hand, was Wagner if he only saw that he was understood, or that anybody sympathized with him! Thus he wrote to Liszt: "When I consider the numerous, extended, and often very able

papers which now proceed from Weimar, and contrast them with the envious hostility which assaulted me, for example, in the reviews of Dresden, and remember with what dire consistency they almost effected a systematic embroiling of the public against me, Weimar seems to me now as a blissful asylum in whose fresh air I can at last inhale deeply and give my contracted heart room." Nobody suffering from the delusion of persecution writes in that strain. Such a person would have found in the articles about Lohengrin some deep-laid plot.

Wagner's "hatred for the Jews" is marked only in a generalized and, I might say, a symbolized sentiment. It never extended to individuals. In his personal commerce with men he knew how strictly to individualize, and was very far from converting his feeling into a principle. The proof of this is, that he was on terms of friendship with many Jews. He intrusted the leadership of his play at the opening of the theatre in Bayreuth to a Jew, which he certainly would never have done if he had been suffering under the delusion that he was persecuted by the Jews.

Herr Puschmann further thinks that erotomania must be diagnosed from Wagner's poems: "His first great *opus*, Das Liebesverbot, glorifies the triumph of free and open sensuality. Still, he there keeps within the limits of decent respectability. But in his latest works the erotic element is put into more undisguised prominence. In Tristan und Isolde he glorifies 'adultery,' in the Walküre 'incest.'" Whoever has followed my account of Wagner's poetry can judge for himself whether Wagner intends therein to glorify adultery and incest. He will perceive that in Wagner's poems the woman never signifies the physical woman, and that by love he never means sexual intercourse; that there is merely an artistic embodiment of ideal sentiments, and that only total misconstruction can lead to such conclusions as those of

Herr Puschmann. Whoever, in spite of all such commentaries, entertains the slightest doubts upon this point may set them at rest by a passage in a letter from Wagner to Liszt. Wagner sent his friend the score of Siegfried after having concluded not to bring it out for a while, and wrote: "I now impart to you readily and with good courage this poem, for now you too no longer need to lift your eyes from it to consider with careful glance your public. You have, for example, no longer any need of anxiety as to what those people shall say of the 'woman' who, when 'woman' is said, always think of their wives, or, if their power of abstraction mounts so high, of some young lady or other."

Enough of Herr Puschmann! But let it be added that this pamphlet of the "specialist in psychiatry," though it made a sensation in its day before the public, was never taken seriously in psychiatric circles, but was always considered as a thoroughly amateurish production. Twenty years have since elapsed. Wagnerian art has now spread over the whole globe, and numbers its adherents by the hundreds of thousands. Recently another specialist in nervous diseases, Herr Nordau, has made the weighty discovery that Wagner was indeed deranged and a degenerate. The whole of Puschmann's nonsense, at which every rational psychiatrist laughed twenty years ago, has been furbished up anew by Herr Nordau, and put forth as the greatest wisdom, the newest acquisition of his scientific investigations.

For the unscientific pamphlet of Puschmann there is an excuse. At that time, twenty years ago, although Wagner already had a great number of warm adherents, Puschmann might still come to the conclusion that upon matter-of-fact people Wagner's music made an impression of absurdity; that it was not capable of exciting an elevated feeling in anybody, etc. In a word, he voiced the sentiments of the majority when he assumed that Wagner's productions were

"*verrücktes Zeug*"—crazy stuff. But things are different today. Understanding of Wagner's art is no longer so uncommon, and on every German opera stage Wagner's works take the lead. Not only in Germany has this success been attained, but far beyond her borders, his renown has pressed. Even in the New World, in far America, there are thousands of enthusiastic Wagner lovers. How does Nordau get away from this fact? Very simply: he says all the world is "crazy," or, at any rate, "hysterical." "Wagner's mighty influence on his contemporaries is to be explained neither by his capacities as author and musician nor by any of his personal qualities, . . . but by the peculiarities in the life of the present nervous temperament. . . . He had the good fortune to endure until the general degeneration and hysteria were sufficiently advanced to supply a rich and nutritious soil for his theories and his art." *

From this, one might think that it were time for publishing new text-books of psychiatry and instructing students that there is only one "normal man" in the world—to wit, Max Nordau. Everybody who writes, composes, or paints anything that Max Nordau does not take a fancy to, is degenerate; and everybody who likes anything that Herr Nordau does not, is hysterical. So long as this platform is not universally accepted in psychiatry, Herr Nordau can not expect to find scientific support. But whoever stands upon the universal ground of science must admit that Herr Nordau is a perfect amateur in the department of psychiatry. I can hardly think that anybody, even a layman in psychiatry, although he be an opponent of Wagner's art, can possibly assent to Herr Nordau's opinions; yet for the sake of justice, we had better enter upon a brief consideration of the main points of his deductions.

Nordau's diagnosis is as follows: "Richard Wagner is

* Degeneration, p. 205.

himself alone charged with a greater abundance of degeneration than all the degenerates put together with whom we have hitherto become acquainted. The stigmata of this morbid condition are united in him in the most complete and most luxuriant development. He displays in the general constitution of his mind the persecution mania, megalomania, and mysticism; in his instincts vague philanthropy, anarchism, a craving for revolt and contradiction; in his writings all the signs of graphomania—namely, incoherence, fugitive ideation, and a tendency to idiotic punning; and, as the groundwork of his being, the characteristic emotionalism of a colour at once erotic and religiously enthusiastic." *

Very indicative of Nordau's dilettanteism is his incidental way of throwing in the most important symptoms of developed insanity, "delusion of persecution" and "delusion of grandeur." As proof of the first, he adduces quite briefly the trite stories about the Jews, which I have already sufficiently considered. Of the latter he simply says: "His megalomania is so well known through his writings, his verbal utterances, and the whole course of his life, that a bare reference to it is sufficient." † Nordau evidently does not know what is meant by a delusive idea; otherwise, he could not talk so innocently. According to him, everybody who thinks he is persecuted has a "delusion of persecution," and everybody who thinks he can accomplish what nobody else can has a "delusion of grandeur." Supposing that Wagner had really had the degree of self-conceit which is often attributed to him—which, as I have already shown, is far from having been the case—supposing it to be true that he believed himself to be the greatest musician of all the ages, to conclude from this alone a delusion of grandeur would be unwarranted in the extreme. Overestimation of self and the delusion of grandeur are widely different things.

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* *Ibid.*, p. 171. † *Ibid.*, p. 172.

One may, for instance, make pretensions to being a thoroughly expert judge of all departments of art and science—music, painting, philosophy, and what not—so much so as to declare that every man who dissents from one's pronouncements ought to be cared for as insane; yet this does not amount to a delusion of grandeur—in the psychiatric sense of the term. No such sign of overrating himself was displayed by Wagner. He respected and honoured the masters of his art as much as any of his contemporaries ever did. Which one of the great masters of music was the greatest of all the ages the psychiatrist, as such, is not competent to say. Whoever it may have been was probably fully aware of it, and if he ever betrayed that consciousness, it was not a mark of insanity. But how very far Wagner was from overestimating himself is shown in his correspondence, which demonstrates how little he was occupied with what he had attained, and how entirely with what he had still to strive for.

Just as any artist who leaves the well-trodden roads and breaks new paths is exposed to every imaginable enmity and misunderstanding, Wagner had to combat persecutions and hostilities, which, far from being imaginary or delusive, were so real that it would have been folly to blind himself to them; and nothing but a rare and precious firmness of character, and an accurate appreciation of his own inward worth, could have carried him through all his tribulations to his eventual triumph.

> He left our ruts,
> But went on steadily and without deviations.

Only psychiatric amateurs—and not the most observant or wisest of them either—can possibly mistake the self-consciousness that marks the developed character for a "delusion of grandeur." Stories about boundless "vanity," a passion for "divine veneration," "incense," and so forth—easily

picked up among the valets and secretaries of any great man—have no foundation but arbitrary distortions or ignorance of the facts. As I have already proved, Wagner asked as little from the great public as did Goethe. In his creating alone, in his art itself, he found satisfaction and contentment. "Believe me implicitly," he wrote to Liszt, "when I tell you that the only reason of my continuing to live as long as I have done is the irresistible impulse to complete a series of works of art which yet have the strength to live within me. I accurately know that nothing but this creation and completion gratifies me; and as for the performance of those works and the seeing them from without, that I can dispense with well enough."

The remaining lucubrations of Nordau are limited almost exclusively to a critique, such as it is, of Wagner's works, and are shaped by the principle that whatever Max Nordau does not like is the work of an insane mind. Wagner's theoretical writings, one and all, fail to obtain Nordau's favour; therefore Wagner is insane. That Wagner himself recognised that what he had to say could not be expressed by words alone, that he saw the inflation of his own style, that his different writings were composed for special objects, and finally that Wagner, with the greatest "reluctance" and only when "driven by need," betook himself to writing—all this has little power to bend the inflexible critic. The long and short of it is that Wagner's writings do not please Nordau. Hence it appears that Wagner was a "graphomaniac." The trifling contradiction between a man's being a "graphomaniac" and his writing with "reluctance" and only when "driven by need," is apparent. Graphomania is pretty nearly the contrary of that. But what difference does that make? One contradiction more or less is a trifle when one is as well supplied with them as Herr Nordau. Here is a sample of Herr Nordau's manner of employing criticism: Concerning Wagner's idea of fusing the different arts into

one great whole, the musical drama, he says: "His art-work of the future is the art-work of times long past. What he takes for evolution is a retrogression, and a return to a primeval human—nay, to a pre-human [!] stage." One wonders what put this notion into Herr Nordau's head. Does he really believe that "pre-human" beings composed musical dramas?

Wagner, in one of his articles, speaks repeatedly of the action of the "head" in contradistinction to that of the "heart." He calls speech the language of the "head" and music that of the "heart." "The organ of the heart is music (*Ton*), and its artistically conscious language is the art of music." Every schoolboy can see what is meant. A form of speech common to all ages and all nations denotes the conative faculties by the term *heart*, as opposed to cold, calculating, speculative understanding—the action of the brain. But Herr Nordau feels himself called upon to challenge this figure of speech in the following terms: "But as his mystically disposed brain was not capable of clearly grasping the various parts of this intricate idea, and of arranging them in parallel lines, he entangled himself in the absurdity of an 'activity of the brain without activity of the heart'; . . . and finally attains to the pure twaddle of calling 'sound' the 'organ of the heart.'" *

We have already remarked that Nordau, in the department of psychiatry, is a mere amateur; so that we must not expect any accurate application of the concepts of the science in his writings. Yet, since he writes upon the subject, it might have been hoped that he would tolerably post himself in relation to it, and not publish things in the most injudicious manner. Now, Herr Nordau assures us that in all Wagner's writings there is hardly a single page "which will not puzzle the unbiassed reader, either through some non-

* *Ibid.*, p. 176.

sensical thought or some impossible mode of expression"; whence one has a right to gather that Nordau has read those writings. But if that be the fact, how was it possible that he could totally mistake the purpose of Wagner's art as it is expressly and distinctly set forth in numerous places in his writings? Wagner declares in so many words—not once, but often, very, very often—that by the "woman" he never meant the physical, sexual woman; that it gave him pain when anybody attributed a religious moral to Tannhäuser, etc. But, notwithstanding these explicit declarations, Herr Nordau sings again the long-worn-out song about the "shameless sensuality," and with a bombastic aping of that scientific jargon which is defensible only so far as it insures precision of ideas, talks of Wagner's "erotomania." Thus he says in one place: "It certainly redounds to the high honour of German public morality that Wagner's operas could have been publicly performed without arousing the greatest scandal. How unperverted must wives and maidens be when they are in a state of mind to witness these pieces without blushing crimson and sinking into the earth for shame! How innocent must even husbands and fathers be who allow their womankind to go to these representations of 'lupanar' incidents! Evidently the German audiences entertain no misgivings concerning the actions and attitudes of Wagnerian personages; they seem to have no suspicion of the emotions by which they are excited, and what intentions their words, gestures, and acts denote; and this explains the peaceful artlessness with which these audiences follow theatrical scenes during which, among a less childlike public, no one would dare lift his eyes to his neighbour or endure his glance. With Wagner amorous excitement assumes the form of mad delirium. The lovers in his pieces behave like tomcats gone mad, rolling in contortions and convulsions over a root of valerian. They reflect a state of mind in the poet which is well known to the professional

expert. It is a form of Sadism. It is the love of those degenerates who, in sexual transport, become like wild beasts. Wagner suffered from 'erotic madness' which leads coarse natures to murder for lust, and inspires 'higher degenerates' with works like Die Walküre, Siegfried, and Tristan und Isolde." *

While Nordau passes by the most important symptoms of insanity, "the delusion of persecution" and "the delusion of grandeur," with startling levity, satisfying himself with mentioning that they are "known to everybody," he tarries to discuss with astonishing thoroughness the erotic element. Let us here adduce only one or two passages: "Mysticism is, as we know, always accompanied by eroticism, especially in the degenerate, whose emotionalism has its chief source in morbidly excited states of the sexual centres. Wagner's imagination is perpetually occupied with woman. But he never sees her relation to man in the form of healthy and natural love, which is a benefit and satisfaction for both lovers. As with all morbid erotics (we have already remarked this in Verlaine and Tolstoi), woman presents herself to him as a terrible force of Nature, of which man is the trembling, helpless victim. The woman that he knows is the gruesome Astarte of the Semites, the frightful man-eating Kali Bhagawati of the Hindoos, an apocalyptic vision of smiling bloodthirstiness, of eternal perdition and infernal torment, in demoniacally beautiful embodiment. . . . Wagner's Elisabeth, Elsa, Senta, and Gertrude are extremely instructive manifestations of erotic mysticism, in which the half-unconscious idea is struggling for form—viz., that the safety of the sexually crazy degenerate lies in purity, continence, or in the possession of a wife having no sort of individuality, no desire and no rights, and hence incapable of ever proving dangerous to the man. In one of

* *Ibid.*, p. 181.

his first compositions, as in his last, in Tannhäuser as in Parsifal, he treats of the combat between the man and his corruptress, the fly *versus* the spider, and in this way testifies that for thirty-three years—from youth to old age—the subject has never been absent from his mind. . . . Siegfried, Götterdämmerung, Tristan und Isolde, are exact repetitions of the essential content of the Walküre. It is always the dramatic embodiment of the same obsession of the terrors of love." *

These passages may suffice. At best, they bespeak at once Nordau's total misunderstanding of Wagner's artistic purpose, and his complete dilettanteism in psychiatric matters. Of the former truth, scarcely anybody who does not with might and main shut out the facts and is not ignorant of Wagner's own declarations, can be in doubt. Whoever still insists, after the observations made above, that Wagner, in the creation of his works of art, was thinking of the sensual, sexual woman, simply will not understand; and there is no help for it. As to the latter point, that a man who his whole life long never showed the slightest indication of sexual anomalies, who lived in happy marriage and was a tender husband and father, should be called an "erotomaniac" solely because love is introduced into his dramas, and that "a morbid state of excitation of his sexual centres" should be diagnosed, is the grossest and sheerest nonsense that ever was. There is scarcely a poet in the whole history of art whom one might not by the same token stamp as an "erotomaniac."

Herr Nordau might by the same right just as well have diagnosed a number of other symptoms from Wagner's poems. Why, for example, does the great musician not suffer from pyromania on the ground of the magic fire in the Walküre? Why does Nordau not declare him a klepto-

* *Ibid.*, p. 188.

maniac, in view of the numerous thefts in Rheingold? There would have been quite as much sense in either diagnosis as in that of erotomania from Tannhäuser. Perhaps Herr Nordau has overlooked these symptoms, and perhaps he will do us the pleasure, in the next edition of his Degeneration, of dishing these up as the latest achievements of his scientific researches.

Nordau has made the important discovery that Wagner was born to be a painter, and only missed his vocation in consequence of his morbid impulses. "Wagner is no comedian," he says, "but a born painter. If he had been a healthy genius, endowed with intellectual equilibrium, that is what he would undoubtedly have become. His inner vision would have forced the brush into his hand, and constrained him to realize it on canvas, by means of colour. . . . He did not understand his natural impulses. Perhaps, also, with the feeling of his own deep organic feebleness, he dreaded the heavy labour of drawing and painting, and, conformably with the law of least effort, his instinct sought vent in the theatre, where his inner visions were embodied by others—the decorative painters, machinists, and actors —without requiring him to exert himself." Did anybody ever hear more luxuriant nonsense? A man who thinks the labour of painting too severe, takes up the musical drama, composing himself both the verse and the music, and thus escapes hard work! Is it possible to make a serious answer to such silly talk?

Equally astounding is the self-complacency with which Nordau passes judgment upon Wagner's music. I, too, am of the opinion that the judgment of art, especially of those arts which appeal to the sensitive heart, is not only open to the theorizing professional, but that the direct sentiment of the unprejudiced layman ought to be its touchstone. Wagner himself gives expression to this thought in the Meistersinger, where Hans Sachs says:

Yet once a year I should think it wise
That the rules themselves should be tested
Whether in custom's stupid rut
Your force and life ye were not losing:
Now whether ye of Nature
Be yet upon the right track
Can tell you only
He who knows nothing of tabulature.*

But when a person who "knows nothing of the rules of the mastersingers" declares both the judgment of an innumerable multitude of experienced masters and the sentiment of hundreds of thousands to be "morbid," solely because he himself thinks and feels otherwise than they, he only pronounces judgment upon himself.

It is well known that Wagner revolutionized the form of opera music. He banished the disconnected interpolated arias, put a stop to the inartistic license of singers in the *recitativo*, introduced a continuous music corresponding to the dramatical treatment and idea, and endeavoured through this music to express that for which the spoken word was inadequate. Of this innovation Nordau says: "It is a product of degenerate thought; it is musical mysticism. It is the form in which incapacity for attention shows itself in music." After having, in the remainder of his criticism, illuminated in a similar way the theory of Wagner's music, the *Leitmotive*, the "unending melody," etc., he reaches the conclusion that Wagner, "in the inmost depths of his nature, and by virtue of his organic constitution, was not a musician, but a confused mixture of a poet

* Doch einmal im Jahre tänd' ich's weise,
Dass man die Regeln selbst probir',
Ob in der Gewohnheit trägem G'leise
Ihr' Kraft und Leben sich nicht verlier':
Und ob ihr der Natur
Noch seid auf rechter Spur,
Dass sagt euch nur,
Wer nichts weiss von der Tabulatur.

feeble in style and a painter lazy of brush, with a Javanese 'Gamelang' accompaniment buzzing in between." *

Concerning the theory of Wagner's art, others may dispute with Nordau, if it seems worth their while. But as to the psychiatric lucubrations by which he reaches the conclusion that Wagner was insane and a "degenerate," I believe that I have characterized them sufficiently, and that I may spare myself a more minute examination thereof.

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* *Ibid.*, p. 203.

CONCLUSION.

THE idea of a universal sickening of the people, of a progressive "degeneration" of the civilized nations, has not merely a few defenders, such as those mentioned in this work. This departure of modern science has found a multitude of adherents, and the advocates of this doctrine have made the concept of degeneration a subject of general popular interest. Beginning with this departure of psychopathology, the doctrine of a gradual retrogression of mankind, a deterioration, generation by generation, of the highly civilized peoples, has extended more and more. Not only in certain professional circles, but even in the educated lay world, we hear of a universal derangement of the nervous system, of a widespread nervous prostration, of mental and bodily deterioration of the present generation as compared with our ancestors.

Art and literature, which have ever expressed the metaphysics of the period, and which consequently now correspond in form and meaning to modern positivism, show of late a decided leaning toward the depicting of degenerative defects of humanity, especially of insanity, as if they were a characteristic of modern society. Although, from the time of Homer to our own, insanity has never dropped from the list of subjects for artistic and poetical treatment, yet each age has had its own reasons for doing so, which have always been closely connected with contemporary metaphysics. In the hallucinatory melancholia of Orestes, Æschylus painted the rage of the Furies follow-

ing and tormenting their victim: "Behold them, like Gorgons clothed in black, surrounded by the coils of many serpents."* In Ajax Fureus, who, suddenly seized with a somnambulic delirium, falls upon the herds of the Achæans and strangles them with their herdsmen, believing that he is killing the princes of the host, Sophocles exhibits the chastening hand of Athene, against whom this bold mortal had once risen in audacious defiance. The ancient poets thus painted mental derangements which obviously they had observed, and painted them in the colouring of mythology, which was the popular metaphysics of that age, as a dispensation of a higher power, a punishment of the angry divinity.

The multitudinous artistic representations of demoniac possession in the Middle Ages, in myriads of paintings, frescoes, reliefs, carvings in stone, wood, and ivory, bronzes, ironwork, goldsmith's-work, etc., the manifold scenes of conjurations and diabolic incitements, afford a clear picture of the insanity of those times. According to Charcot and Richer,† whom we have to thank for their thorough researches in this field, the dislocations and distortions of those possessed are quite typical of cases of disease that may be observed to-day.

The first poet who recognised insanity as a disease and painted it as such is Shakespeare, whose fine power of observation far outstripped his age. He who could paint the world in all its truth and reality, who was able to reproduce the most diverse characters, unfalsified and true to Nature, succeeded also in painting in a masterly way mental derangements in all their typical phenomena, just as we observe them to-day, and this at a time at which science was far from a correct recognition of psychical disorders.

* Æschyli Choëphoræ.

† Les démoniaques dans l'art, Paris, 1887.

In Shakespeare, the derangements of King Lear, Hamlet, and Lady Macbeth are photographic reproductions of pure objective experience. They fill out certainly the world of the poet who painted all human passions with minute fidelity in his plays, and therefore undertook also to paint according to his observation the human mind under morbid obscuration. In these characters, therefore, we have neither the embodiment of any particular conception of the universe nor an artistic dressing up of any moral or doctrine.

It is very different with the portraiture of insanity in our modern literature. The doctrine of psychiatry has in the interval grown into a distinct branch of science, and the observation of the insane is carried on in an exceedingly thorough and careful manner. In order to paint a case of insanity according to Nature, an artist no longer needs, like Shakespeare, to be leagues in advance of his age. He only need copy a well-reported history of a case, and his purpose is attained. Consequently the simple description of psychical disease no longer comes within the domain of the poet; and if we leave out of view those *littérateurs* who have in the practice of their art followed the desire for originality and sensational effects, we do not find in modern literature insanity exhibited for the direct interest of it, but only in so far as it affects individual social relations and society collectively.

The idea of a universal psychical degeneration, as it is put forth by many psychiatrists, likewise has its literary defenders. I have already called Zola a "Nordau in the shape of a novelist"; and this is also true of other writers of similar theories. Frau Alving, in Ibsen's Ghosts, says: "We are all ghosts. . . . I can not take up a newspaper without seeming to see the ghosts slinking between the lines. Ghosts must live throughout the land. It seems to me they must be as the sands of the sea." We seem to be hearing

Herr Nordau pronouncing upon the immanent *Völkerdämmerung*, upon the gradual coming and increasing of universal degeneration among mankind. Nordau considers that those writers who share his own opinions show, precisely by that, an infallible mark of their being fools and degenerates. His master, Lombroso, on the other hand, acknowledges that Zola and Ibsen "teach the same thing" that he himself teaches.*

It is not Ibsen's purpose to paint mental sickenings just as they really are. They are the mere vehicles of his ideas, especially of the law of heredity, of the influence of a licentious and dissolute course of life upon the development of the next generation. Neither the painting of the maladies nor the selection of those which are represented as transmitted in procreation correspond to the real facts. But the writer did not mind that. While Nordau makes this a grave matter for reproach and even a ground for psychiatric inferences, Lombroso expressly declares that it is not right to insist upon scientific accuracy from a poet in his painting of insanity, but that it is proper for him to proceed *cum grano salis*, so as to give his idea an artistic embodiment. At any rate, the exhibition of the clinical picture, as such, is in Ibsen altogether a secondary matter, the purpose of the poetic use of nervous disorders being the moral. Oswald, in Ghosts, is the victim of the dissipations of his father. Dr. Rank, in Nora, says: "My poor innocent spine has to expiate the joyous lieutenant's life of my father." He strongly accentuates the moral: "And so such an inexorable retribution governs in one way or another every family." We thus meet in the poet the same idea that Nordau proclaims—that of a widespread hereditary sickening—a universal degeneration.

The circumstance that Ibsen makes a quite arbitrary

* Ibsen's Gespenster und die Psychiatrie, Die Zukunft, Berlin, 1893, vol. iv, No. 51.

choice of diseases to exhibit his concept of heredity and degeneration is not surprising, and as poet he can the less be reproached for it that he follows in that respect the doctrines of one school of scientific men. We may smile at Ibsen's representing, in Ghosts, general paresis as an hereditary infliction; in Nora, a disease of the spine, *tabes;* in The Wild Duck, a disease of the eyes; but, after all, this entirely agrees with a certain departure which has lately found place in psychopathology.

The widespread idea of a universal "degeneration" is in great part due to the belief that every mental disease and most nervous sufferings are phenomena of "degeneration" —a belief which is not only general among the laity, but to which many psychiatrists incline. At any rate, they place psychoses in that category which do not belong there at all. It would result from this opinion that any decided increase in the frequency of insanity, disproportionate to the growth of the population, must be a "degeneration," since, according to them, almost all mental diseases are consequences of the process by which a state of "degeneration" is brought about.

The concept of "degeneration" is, as I have already explained, that of a morbid condition resulting from perturbations of growth of the psychical organ. Degenerates are at a low stage of development; the organic vehicles of their mental action are either merely at that low stage of growth or are deformed and misshapen. The degeneration of a whole people would therefore be due to a universal mental deterioration, an arrest of the psychical organ, and at last, since the completely degenerate, the extreme idiots, are incapable of procreation, if the process which gave rise to the state of degeneration progressed still further, the race would die out. But the history of insanity shows that the increase of it depends in part upon the progress of higher civilization. A heightened mental action, a refinement and elaboration of

the psychical organism, has for a consequence a greater disposition to mental derangements. But to infer from this heightened mental action, or, what comes to the same thing, from the increased number of cases of derangement which results from it, that there has been a universal retrogression of mental development, resulting in a "degeneration" of the masses, is just as erroneous as to identify the highest refinement and elaboration of the psychical organism, or genius, with insanity.

The question of a state of universal degeneration, resulting from a process of mental decay, must therefore be treated quite independently from the question of an increase of cases of insanity. Maladies contracted late in life can not be ascribed to disturbances of growth, and have nothing to do with degeneration. When Nordau avers that the diagnosis of degeneration in Baudelaire was "fortified against all attack" by the fact that he "died of general paresis,"* he simply shows that he does not know what the word degeneration means. Paresis is a disease occurring most frequently in fully developed men, seldom in degenerates, and never in idiots. Von Krafft-Ebing† says of its procatarctic cause, "It is seldom congenital, hereditary; mostly acquired." If, therefore, we limit the concept of degeneration to such morbid states as can undoubtedly be referred to perturbations of growth, an increase of mental diseases does not indicate a progressive degeneration.

The universal opinion that the sudden revolution in all modes of life, owing to the great inventions of this century—the railway, the telephone, etc.—have had a bad influence on the nervous system, has a certain amount of justification. A number of cases of nervous exhaustion have arisen owing to this unwonted and overstrained bustle of modern life. But the importance attributed to these outward causes is too

* Degeneration, p. 285. † *Op. cit.*, p. 670.

great by far; and there is especially too much inclination to exaggerate the sudden change of our modes of life, great as it undeniably is. From some descriptions of it, one might think that we had suddenly been carried from the merest sluggard's life to the supreme development of higher civilization. When Nordau says that "the humblest village inhabitant has to-day a wider geographical horizon, more numerous and complex intellectual interests, than the prime minister of a petty or even a second-rate state a century ago," and that to-day "a cook receives and sends more letters than a university professor did formerly," * he simply indulges in ridiculous exaggeration. I know not what intricate mental interests Herr Nordau has discovered in the "humblest village inhabitant." When he tries to prove this by saying that the villager "interests himself simultaneously in the issue of a revolution in Chili, in a bush war in east Africa, a massacre in north China, a famine in Russia, a street row in Spain, and an international exhibition in North America," † he perhaps overestimates somewhat the mental interests of the "humblest village inhabitant." I fancy that the mental interests of the peasantry to-day, as centuries ago, turn much more on the thriving of their pigs and calves than on revolutionists in Chili or bushwhackers in east Africa. At any rate, we may safely assert that the German peasants are in no present danger of overtaxing their nervous systems by their "numerous and complex intellectual interests."

We must confess that life to-day makes higher demands upon the individual than in the last century; but it is an exaggeration for Nordau to maintain that every single man does from five to five-and-twenty times as much work as he would have done half a century ago. On the whole, more is accomplished now than used to be done, because, thanks to

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* Degeneration, p. 39. † *Ibid.*

the great inventions, a workman can now do more in one hour than ten workmen could do in a whole day a century ago. But the expenditure of strength of any one man is not very much greater.

The mental work of the "upper ten thousand," who are now supposed to be in a state of degeneration, has certainly not been so monstrously increased as many are disposed to think. Besides, mere work does not wear out the nervous system nearly so much as the agitations of the emotions connected with the intensification of the battle of life. These things have, as I have elsewhere shown, an important influence upon the bodily functions, especially those of the vascular system, and thus upon the entire work of nutrition. Wundt* says: "Care and sorrow influence nutrition by enduring limitation of the entrance of air and blood." Quiet intellectual work, even if conjoined with great effort, does far less harm to the nervous system than do such emotions as affliction and anxiety.

Had we, therefore, any reason to presume a universal degeneration of the highly civilized nations, the causes of it should be sought, above all, in the intensification of the daily battle of life, with its train of depressing emotions and anxieties. The increased impressions of the senses, and the heightened demands upon the resistance of the nervous system, occasioned by the sudden revolution—when they do not bring about serious emotional disturbances, vexations, etc.—may cause some fatigue, but are matters to which the human organism quickly becomes habituated by the law of adaptation.

Our social relations undoubtedly draw more upon the powers of the individual than did those of a century ago. Yet that generation likewise thought its tasks more difficult

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* Wilhelm Wundt. Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie, third edition, Leipsic, 1887, ii, p. 457.

than those of its forefathers. We can not conceive that our grade of civilization determines the limits of human capacity. The demands which will be put upon the life of coming generations will probably be far greater yet; but the human system will contrive to adapt itself to those demands. The weak will go to the wall; the strong will mount to higher grades of development. This law of adaptation and of further development always has operated in Nature, and will still continue to do so.

The arguments of which the sectaries of universal degeneration avail themselves are, as we have seen in the course of our investigations, by no means demonstrative. They rest partly upon erroneous doctrines and partly upon a quite amateurish apprehension of psychological and psychiatrical concepts. Philosophy, art, and literature, in which Nordau thinks he sees signs of universal degeneration, are merely the expression of the modern metaphysics, of religious scepticism, and of philosophical positivism.

Moreover, by a very remarkable contradiction, Nordau himself destroys his whole theory. After having characterized modern art as the principal evidence of universal degeneration, he declares, at the conclusion of his work, that it constitutes a forward step in human development. He says: "The fable and the fairy tale were once the highest productions of the human mind. . . . To-day they represent a species of literature only cultivated for the nursery. The verse—which by rhythm, figurative expression, and rhyme, trebly betrays its origin in the stimulation of rhythmically functioning subordinate organs, in associations of ideas working according to external similitudes, and in that working according to consonance—was originally the only form of literature. To-day it is only employed for purely emotional portrayal; for all other purposes it has been conquered by prose, and indeed has almost passed into the condition of an atavistic language.

Under our very eyes the novel is being increasingly degraded, serious and highly cultivated men scarcely deeming it worthy of attention, and it appeals more and more exclusively to the young and to women."* According to this, we must presume that our art, which has already "conquered" its earlier form, stands upon a higher grade of development, so that there can be no question of degeneration in it. But the idea that the poetry of a Homer, a Dante, a Goethe, has proceeded "from the stimulation of rhythmically functioning, subordinate organs," and that it ought to-day to be considered as in "the condition of an atavistic language," is as ridiculous as the contrary thesis of the degeneration of modern art. No subordinate organs, but the idealistic universe-conception of the times, dictated the form of art in each period of the world's history.

When Nordau asserts that—in case his "therapy" is considered and humanity is thus protected from further arrest and degeneration—"after some centuries art and poetry will have become pure atavisms, and will no longer be cultivated except by the most emotional portion of humanity—by women, by the young, perhaps even by children,"† his assertion rests upon ignorance of the psychical constitution of those heroes of the mind whom we call geniuses. Whoever does not persist in the attitude of Moreau and with him stigmatizes genius as a morbid condition, will see that, with the further mental development of humanity, creative genius will continue to produce, as it always has been producing. In discussing the psychology of genius we have seen that "the artist of genius does not create because he would, but because he must." Hence art will continue to subsist as long as there are men upon the earth.

As to the form which the art of future centuries is to

* Degeneration, p. 543. † *Ibid.*

assume, all possibility of divining it fails us. We know that it is always dependent upon the contemporary conception of the universe. But how this will shape itself in the distant future we can not know. It were therefore a vain proceeding to discuss the subject, or to express any decided opinion about the matter.

According to our investigations, we must necessarily come to the conclusion that the authors mentioned have adduced no proof of the alleged universal degeneration in the highly civilized nations. Mankind is not in a "black plague of degeneration"; and the world has as little need to be scared by stories of the *Völkerdämmerung* as by the prophecy of Herr Falb about the immanent destruction of our planet. On the other hand, the further development of mankind will be greatly benefited if the teachings of science are attended to and the various baneful influences that act upon the nervous system are combated. In that way increase of insanity may be prevented, and a sane and well-developed posterity insured.

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THE END.

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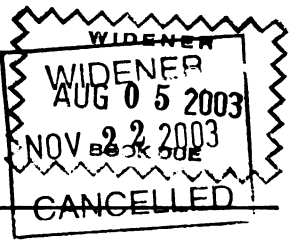

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